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WILSON'S

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND

HISTORICAL, TRADITIONARY, AND IMAGINATIVE.

WITH A GLOSSARY

REVISED BY ALEXANDER LEIGHTON,

ONE OF THE ORIGINAL EDITORS AND CONTRIBUTORS.

NEW EDITION.

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WILSON'S

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE WIFE OR THE WUDDY.

"There was a criminal in a cart
  Agoing to be hanged—
Reprieve to him was granted;
  The crowd and cart did stand,
To see if he would marry a wife,
  Or, otherwise, choose to die!
'Oh, why should I torment my life?'
  The victim did reply;
'The bargain's bad in every part—
But a wife's the worst!—drive on the cart.'"

Honest Sir John Falstaff talketh of "minions of the moon;" and, truth to tell, two or three hundred years ago, nowhere was such an order of knighthood more prevalent than upon the Borders. Not only did the Scottish and English Borderers make their forays across the Tweed and the ideal line, but rival chieftains, though of the same nation, considered themselves at liberty to make inroads upon the property of each other. The laws of *meum* and *tuum* they were unable to comprehend. Theirs was the strong man's world, and with them *might* was *right*. But to proceed with our story. About the beginning of the seventeenth century, one of the boldest knights upon the Borders was William Scott, the young laird of Harden. His favourite residence was Oak-

wood Tower, a place of great strength, situated on the banks of the Ettrick. The motto of his family was "*Reparabit cornua Phœbe*," which being interpreted by his countrymen, in their vernacular idiom, ran thus—"We'll hae moonlight again." Now, the young laird was one who considered it his chief honour to give effect to both the spirit and the letter of his family motto. Permitting us again to refer to honest Falstaff, it implied that they were "gentlemen of the night;" and he was not one who would loll upon his pillow when his "avocation" called him to the foray.

It was drawing towards midnight, in the month of October, when the leaves in the forest had become brown and yellow, and with a hard sound rustled upon each other, that young Scott called together his retainers, and addressing them, said—"Look ye, friends, is it not a crying sin and a national shame to see things going aglee as they are doing? There seems hardly such a thing as manhood left upon the Borders. A bit scratch with a pen upon parchment is becoming of more effect than a stroke with the sword. A bairn now stands as good a chance to hold and to have, as an armed man that has a hand to take and to defend. Such a state o' things was only made for those who are ower lazy to ride by night, and ower cowardly to fight. Never shall it be said that I, William Scott of Harden, was one who either submitted or conformed to it. Give me the good, old, manly law, that 'they shall keep who can,' and wi' my honest sword will I maintain my right against every enemy. Now, there is our natural and lawful adversary, auld Sir Gideon Murray o' Elibank, carries his head as high as though he were first cousin to a king, or the sole lord o' Ettrick Forest. More than once has he slighted me in a way which it wasna for a Scott to bear; and weel do I ken that he has the will, and wants but the power, to harry us o' house and ha'. But, by my troth, he shall pay a dear reckoning for a' the insults he has

offered to the Scotts o' Harden. Now, every Murray among them has a weel-stocked mailing, and their kine are weel-favoured; to-night the moon is laughing cannily through the clouds:—therefore, what say ye, neighbours—will ye ride wi' me to Elibank? and, before morning, every man o' them shall have a toom byre."

"Hurra!" shouted they, "for the young laird! He is a true Scott from head to heel! Ride on, and we will follow ye! Hurra!—the moon glents ower the hills to guide us to the spoils o' Elibank! To-night we shall bring langsyne back again."

There were twenty of them, stout and bold men, mounted upon light and active horses—some armed with firelocks, and others with Jeddart staves; while, in addition to such weapons, every man had a good sword by his side. At their head was the fearless young laird; and, at a brisk pace, they set off towards Elibank. Mothers and maidens ran to their cottage doors, and looked after them with foreboding hearts when they rode along; for it was a saying amongst them, that "when young Willie Scott o' Harden set his foot in the stirrup at night, there were to be swords drawn before morning." They knew, also, the feud between him and the house of Elibank, and as well did they know that the Murrays were a resolute and a sturdy race.

Morn had not dawned when they arrived at the scene where their booty lay. Not a Murray was abroad; and to the extreme they carried the threat of the young laird into execution, of making "toom byres." By scores and by hundreds, they collected together, into one immense herd, horned cattle and sheep, and they drove them before them through the forest towards Oakwood Tower. The laird, in order to repel any rescue that might be attempted, brought up the rear, and, in the joy of his heart, he sang, and, at times, cried aloud, "There will be dry breakfasts in Elibank before the sun gets oot, but a merry meal at Oakwood afore

he gangs doun. An entire bullock shall be roasted, and wives and bairns shall eat o' it."

"I humbly beg your pardon, Maister William," said an old retainer, named Simon Scott, and who traced a distant relationship to the family; "I respectfully ask your pardon; but I have been in your faither's family for forty years, and never was backward in the hoor o' danger, or in a ploy like this; but ye will just alloo me to observe, sir, that wilfu' waste maks wofu' want, and I see nae occasion whatever for roasting a bullock. It would be as bad as oor neebors on the ither side o' the Tweed, wha are roast, roastin', or bakin' in the oven, every day o' the week, and makin' a stane weight o' meat no gang sae far as twa or three pounds wad hae dune. Therefore, sir, if ye will tak my advice, if we are to hae a feast, there will be nae roastin' in the way. There was a fine sharp frost the other nicht, and I observed the rime lying upon the kail; so that baith greens and savoys will be as tender as a weel-boiled three-month-auld chicken; and I say, therefore, let the beef be boiled, and let them hae ladlefu's o' kail, and ye will find, sir, that instead o' a hail bullock, even if ye intend to feast auld and young, male and female, upon the lands o' Oakwood, a quarter o' a bullock will be amply sufficient, and the rest can be sauted doun for winter's provisions. Ye ken, sir, that the Murrays winna let us lichtly slip for this nicht's wark; and it is aye safest, as the saying is, to lay by for a sair fit."

"Well argued, good Simon," said the young laird; "but your economy is ill-timed. After a night's work such as this there is surely some licence for gilravishing. I say it —and who dare contradict me?—to-night there is not one belonging to the house of Harden, be they old or young, who shall not eat of roast meat, and drink of the best."

"Weel, sir," replied Simon, "wi' reverence be it spoken, but I would beg to say that ye are wrang. Folk that ance

get a liking for dainties tak ill wi' plainer fare again; and, moreover, sir, in a' my experience, I never kenned dainty bits and hardihood to go hand in hand; but, on the contrary, luxuries mak men effeminate, and discontented into the bargain."

The altercation between the old retainer and his young master ran farther; but it was suddenly interrupted by the deep-mouthed baying of a sleuth-hound; and its threatening howls were followed by a loud cry, as if from fifty voices, of—"To-night for Sir Gideon and the house of Elibank!"

But here we pause to say that Sir Gideon Murray of Elibank was a man whose name was a sound of terror to all who were his enemies. As a foe, he was fierce, resolute, unforgiving. He had never been known to turn his back upon a foe, or forgive an injury. He knew the meaning of justice in its severest sense, but not of compassion; he was a stranger to the attribute of mercy, and the life of the man who had injured him, he regarded as little as the life of the worm which he might tread beneath his heel upon his path. He was a man of middle age; and had three daughters, none of whom were what the world calls beautiful; but, on the contrary, they were what even the dependents upon his estates described as "very ordinary-looking young women."

Such was Sir Gideon Murray of Elibank; and, although the young laird of Harden conceived that he had come upon him as "a thief in the night"—and some of my readers, from the transaction recorded, may be somewhat apt to take the scriptural quotation in a literal sense—yet I would say, as old Satchel sings of the Borderers of those days, they were men—

> "Somewhat unruly, and very ill to tame.
> I would have none think that I call them thieves;
> For, if I did, it would be arrant lies."

But, stealthily as the young master of Harden had made his preparations for the foray, old Sir Gideon had got timely notice of it; and hence it was, that not a Murray seemed astir when they took the cattle from the byres, and drove them towards Oakwood. But, through the moonlight, there were eyes beheld every step they took—their every movement was watched and traced; and amongst those who watched was the stern old knight, with fifty followers at his back.

"Quiet! quiet!" he again and again, in deep murmurs, uttered to his dependents, throwing back his hand, and speaking in a deep and earnest whisper, that awed even the slow but ferocious sleuth-hound that accompanied them, and caused it to crouch back to his feet. In a yet deeper whisper, he added, encouragingly—"Patience, my merry men!—bide your time!—ye shall hae work before long go by."

When, therefore, the young laird and his followers began to disperse in the thickest of the forest, as they drove the cattle before them, Sir Gideon suddenly exclaimed—"Now for the onset!" And, at the sound of his voice, the sleuth-hound howled loud and savagely.

"We are followed!—Halt! halt!—to arms! to arms!" cried the heir of Harden.

Three or four were left in charge of the now somewhat scattered herd of cattle, and to drive them to a distance; while the rest of the party spurred back their horses as rapidly as the tangled pass in the forest would permit, to the spot from whence the voice of their young leader proceeded. They arrived speedily, but they arrived too late. In a moment, and with no signal save the baying of the hound, old Sir Gideon and his armed company had burst upon young Scott and Old Simon, and ere the former could cry for assistance, they had surrounded them.

"Willie Scott! ye rash laddie!" cried Sir Gideon—"yield

quietly, or a thief's death shall ye die; and in the very forest through which ye have this night driven my cattle, the corbies and you shall become acquaint—or, at least, if ye see not them, they shall see you and feel you too."

"Brag on, ye auld greybeard," exclaimed the youth; but while a Scott o' Harden has a finger to wag, no power on earth shall make his tongue say 'I am conquered!' So come on!—do your best—do your worst—here is the hand and the sword to meet ye!—and were ye ten to one, ye shall find that Willie Scott isna the lad to turn his back, though ten full-grown Murrays stand before his face."

"By my sooth, then, callant," cried the old knight, "and it was small mercy, after what ye hae done, that I intended to show ye; and after what ye hae said, it shall be less that I will grant ye. Sae come on lads, and now to humble the Hardens."

"Arm! every Scott to arms!" again shouted the young laird; "and now, Sir Gideon, if ye will measure weapons, and leave your *weel-faured* daughters as a legacy to the world, be it sae. But there are lads among your clan o' whom they would hae been glad, and who, belike in *pity*, might hae offered them their hands, but who will this night mak a bride o' the green sward! Sae come on, Sir Gideon, and on you and yours be the consequence!"

"Before sunrise," returned Sir Gideon, "and the winsome laird o' Harden shall boast less vauntingly, and rue that he had broke his jeers upon an auld man. Touch me, sir, but not my bairns."

The conflict began, and on each side the strife was bloody and desperate. Bold men grasped each other by the throat, and they held their swords to each other's breasts, scowling one upon another with the ferocity of contending tigers, ere each gave the deadly plunge which was to hurl both into eternity. The report of fire-arms, the clash of swords, the clang of shields, with the neighing of maddened horses, the

lowing of affrighted cattle, the howl of the sleuth-hounds, and the angry voices of fierce men, mingled wildly together, and, in one fearful and discordant echo, rang through the forest. This wild sound was followed by the low melancholy groans of the dying. But, as I have already stated, the Scotts, and the cattle which they drove before them, were scattered, and ere those who were in advance could arrive to the rescue of their friends in the rear, the latter were slain, wounded, or overpowered. They also fought against fearful odds. The young laird himself had his sword broken in his grasp, and his horse was struck dead beneath him. He was instantly surrounded and made prisoner by the Murrays; and, at the same time, old Simon fell into their hands.

The few remaining retainers of the house of Harden gave way when they found their leader a captive, and they fled, leaving the cattle behind them. Sir Gideon Murray, therefore, recovered all that had been taken from him; and though he had captured but two prisoners, the one was the chief, and the other his principal adviser and second in command. The old knight, therefore, commanded that they should be bound with cords together, and in such rueful plight led to his castle at Elibank. It was noon before they reached it, and Lady Murray came forth to welcome her husband, and congratulate him upon his success. But when she beheld the heir of Harden a captive, and thought of how little mercy was to be expected from Sir Gideon when once aroused, she remembered that she was a mother, and that one of her children might one day be situated as their prisoner then was.

The young laird, with his aged kinsman and dependent, were thrust into a dark room; and he who locked them up informed them that the next day their bodies would be hung up on the nearest tree.

"My life and lang fasting!" exclaimed Simon, "ye surely

wouldna be speaking o' sic a thing as hanging to an auld man like me. If we were to be shot or beheaded—though I would like neither the ane nor the ither—it wouldna be a thing in particular to be complained o'; but to be hanged like a dog is so disgracefu' and unchristian-like, that I would rather die ten times in a day, than feel a hempen cravat about my neck ance. And, moreover, I must say that hanging is not treating my dear young maister and kinsman as he ocht to be treated. His birth, his rank, and the memory o' his ancestors and mine, demand mair respect; and therefore, I say, gae tell your maister, that, if he is determined that we are to die—though I have no ambition to cut my breath before my time—that I think, as a gentleman, it is his duty to see that we die the death o' gentlemen.

"Silence, Simon," cried the young laird; "let Murray hang us in his bedchamber if he will. No matter what manner o' death we die, provided only that we die like men. Let him hang us if he dare, and the disgrace be his that is coward enough so to make an end of his enemy.

"O sir," said Simon, "but that is poor comfort to a man that has to leave a small family behind him.

"Simon! are you afraid to die?" cried the captive laird, in a tone of rebuke.

"No, your honour," said Simon—"that is, I am no more afraid to die than other men are, or ought to be—but only ye'll observe, sir, that I have no ambition—not, as I may say, to draw my last breath upon a wuddy, but to have it very unnaturally stopped. Begging your pardon, but you are a young man, while I have a wife and family that would be left to mourn for me!—and O sir! the wife and the bits o' bairns press unco sairly upon a man's heart, when death tries to come in the way between him and them. In exploits like that in which we were last night engaged, and also in battles abroad, I have faced danger in every shape a hundred

times—yet, sir, to be shot in a moment, as it were, or to be run through the body, and to die honourably on the field, is a very different thing from deliberately walking up a ladder to the branch o' a tree, from which we are never to come doun in life again. And mair than that, if we had been o' Johnny Faa's gang, they couldna hae treated us mair disrespectfully than to condemn us to the death that they have decreed for us."

"Providing ye die bravely, Simon," said the young laird, "it is little matter what manner o' death ye die; and as for your wife and weans, fear not; my faither's house will provide for them. For, though I fall now, there will be other heirs left to the estate o' Harden."

While the prisoners thus conversed in the place of their confinement, Lady Murray spoke unto her husband, saying —"And what, Sir Gideon, if it be a fair question, may ye intend to do wi' the braw young laird o' Harden, now that he is in your power?"

He drew her gently by the arm towards tne window, and pointing towards a tree which grew at the distance of a few yards, he said—"Do ye see yonder branch o' the elm tree that is waving in the wind? To-morrow, young Scott and his kinsman shall swing there together, or hereafter say that I am no Murray."

"O guidman!" said she, "it is because I was terrified that ye would be doing the like o' that, that caused me to ask the question. Now, I must say, Sir Gideon, whatever ye may think, that ye are not only acting cruelly, but foolishly."

"I care naething about the cruelty," cried he; "what mercy did ever a Scott among them show to me or to mine? Lady Murray, the ball is at my foot, and I will kick it, though I deprive Scott o' Harden o' a head. And what mean ye, dame, by saying I act foolishly?"

"Only this, guidman," said she—"that ye hae three

daughters to marry, whom the world doesna consider to be ower weel-faured, and it isna every day that ye hae a husband for ane o' them in your hand."

"Sooth!" cried he, "and for once in your life ye are right, guidwife—there is mair wisdom in that remark than I would hae gien ye credit for. To-morrow, the birkie o' Harden shall have his choice—either upon the instant to marry our daughter, Meikle-mouthed Meg, or strap for it."

"Weel, Sir Gideon," added she, "to make him marry Meg will be mair purpose-like than to cut off the head and the hope of an auld house, in the very flower o' his youth; and there is nae doubt as to the choice he will mak, for there is an unco difference between them."

"Dinna be ower sure," continued the knight; "there is nae saying what his choice may be. There is both pluck and a spirit o' contradiction in the callant, and I wouldna be in the least surprised if he preferred the wuddy. I ken, had I been in his place, what my choice would hae been."

"I daresay, Sir Gideon," replied the old lady, who was jocose at the idea of seeing one of her daughters wed, "I daresay I could guess what that choice would hae been."

"And what, in your wisdom," said he sharply, "do ye think it would hae been—the wife or the wuddy?"

"O Gideon! Gideon!" said she, good-humouredly, and shaking her head, "weel do ye ken that your choice would hae been a wife."

"There ye are wrang," cried he; "I would rather die a death that was before me, than marry a wife I had never seen. But go ye and prepare Meg for becoming a bride the morn, and I shall see what the intended bridegroom says to the proposal."

In obedience to his commands, she went to an apartment

in which their eldest daughter Agnes, but commonly called "Meikle-mouthed Meg," then sat, twirling a distaff. The old dame sat down by her daughter's side, and, after a few observations respecting the weather, and the quality of the lint she was then torturing into threads, she said—"Weel, I'm just thinking, Meggie, that ye mak me an auld woman. Ye would be six-and-twenty past at last Lammas."

"So I believe, mother!" said Meggie; and a sigh, or a very deep and long-drawn breath, followed her words.

"Dear me!" continued the old lady, "young men maun be growing very scarce. I wanted four months and five days o' being nineteen when I married your faither, and I had refused at least six offers before I took him!"

"Ay, mother," replied the maiden; "but ye had a weel-faured face—there lay the difference! Heigho!"

"Heigho!" responded her mother, as in pleasant raillery—"what is the lassie heighoing at? Certes, if ye get a guidman before ye be six and twenty, ye may think yoursel' a very fortunate woman."

"Yes," added the maiden; "but I see sma' prospect o' that. I doubt ye will see the Ettrick running through the 'dowie dells o' Yarrow,' before ye hear tell o' an offer being made to me."

"Hoot, hoot!—dinna say sae, bairn," added her mother; "there is nae saying what may betide ye yet. Ye think ye winna be married before ye are six and twenty; but, truly, my dear, there has mony a mair unlikely ship come to land. Now, what wad ye think o' the young laird o' Harden?"

"Mother! mother!" said Agnes, "wherefore do ye mock me? I never saw ye do that before. My faither has ta'en William Scott a prisoner; and, from what I hae heard, he will hang him in the morning. Ye ken what a man my faither is—when he says a thing he will do it; and

how can you jest about the young man, when his very existence is reduced to a matter o' minutes and moments. Though, rather than my faither should tak his life, if I could save him, he should take mine.

"Weel said, my bairn," replied the old woman; "but dinna ye be put about concerning what will never come to pass. I doubtna that, before morning, ye will find young Scott o' Harden at your feet, and begging o' you to save his life, by giving him your hand and troth, and becoming his wife: and then, ye ken, your faither couldna, for shame, hang or do ony harm to his ain son-in-law."

"O mother! mother!" replied Agnes, "it will never be in my power to save him; for what ye hae said he will never think o'; and even if I were his wife, I question if my faither would pardon him, though I should beg it upon my knees."

"Oh, your faither's no sae ill as that, Meggie, my doo," said the old lady. "Mark my words—if Willie Scott consent to marry you, ye will henceforth find him and your faither hand and glove."

While this conversation between Lady Murray and her daughter took place, Sir Gideon entered the room where his prisoners were confined, and, addressing the young laird, said—"Now, ye rank marauder, though death is the very least that ye deserve or can expect from my hands, yet I will gie ye a chance for your life, and ye shall choose between a wife and the wuddy. To-morrow morning, ye shall either marry my daughter Meg, or swing from the branch o' the nearest tree, and the bauldest Scott upon the Borders shanna tak ye down, until ye drop away, bone by bone, a fleshless skeleton."

"Good save us! most honourable and good Sir Gideon!" suddenly interrupted Simon, in a tone which bespoke his horror; "but ye certainly dinna intend to make an anatomy o' me too; or surely, when my honoured maister marries

Miss Murray (as I hope and trust he will), ye will alloo me to dance at their wedding, instead o' dancing in the air, and keeping time to the music o' the soughing wind. And, O maister! for my sake, for your ain sake, and especially out o' regard to my sma' and helpless family, consent to marry the lassie, though she isna extraordinar' weel-faured; for I am sure that, rather than die a dog's death, swinging from a tree, I would marry twenty wives, though they were a' as auld as the hills, as ugly as a starless midnicht, and had tongues like trumpets."

"Peace, Simon!" cried the young laird, impatiently; "if ye hae turned coward, keep the sound o' yer fears within yer ain teeth. And ye, Sir Gideon," added he, turning towards the old knight, "in your amazing mercy and generosity, would spare my life, upon condition that I should marry your *bonny* daughter Meg! Look ye, sir—I am Scott o' Harden, and ye are Murray o' Elibank; there is no love lost between us; chance has placed my life in your hands—take it, for I wouldna marry your daughter though ye should gie me life, and a' the lands o' Elibank into the bargain. I fear as little to meet death as I do to tell you to your teeth that, had ye fallen into my hands, I would have hung ye wi' as little ceremony as I would bring a whip across the back o' a disobedient hound. Therefore, ye are welcome to do the same by me. Ye have taken what ye thought to be a sure mode o' getting a husband for ane o' your *winsome* daughters; but, in the present instance, it has proved a wrong one, auld man. Do your worst, and there will be Scotts enow left to revenge the death o' the laird o' Harden."

"There, then, is my thumb, young braggart," exclaimed Sir Gideon, "that I winna hinder ye in your choice; for to-morrow ye shall be exalted as Haman was; and let those revenge your death who dare."

"Maister!—dear maister!" cried Simon, wringing his

hands, "will ye sacrifice me also, and break the hearts o' my puir wife and family! O sir, accept o' Sir Gideon's proposal, and marry his dochter."

"Silence! ye milk-livered slave!" cried the young laird. "Do ye pretend to bear the name o' Scott, and yet tremble like an ash leaf at the thought o' death!"

"Ye will excuse me, sir," retorted Simon, "but I tremble at no such thing; only, as I have already remarked, I have no particular ambition for being honoured wi' the exaltation o' the halter; and, moreover, I see no cause why a man should die unnecessarily, or where death can be avoided. Sir Gideon," added he, "humble prisoner as I at this moment am, and in your power, I leave it to you if ever ye saw ony thing in my conduct in the field o' battle (and ye have seen me there) that could justify ony ane in calling me either milk-livered or a coward? But, sir, I consider it would be altogether unjustifiable to deprive ane o' life, which is always precious, merely because my maister is stubborn, and winna marry your daughter. But, oh, sir, I am not a very auld man yet, and if ye will set me at liberty, though I am now a married man, in the event o' my ever becoming a widower, I gie ye my solemn promise that I will marry ony o' your dochters that ye please!"

"Audacious idiot!" exclaimed the old knight, raising his hand and striking poor Simon to the ground.

"Sir Gideon Murray!" cried the young laird fiercely, "are ye such a base knave as to strike a fettered prisoner! Shame fa' ye, man! where is the pride o' the Murrays now?"

Sir Gideon evidently felt the rebuke, and, withdrawing from the apartment, said, as he departed—"Remember that when the sun-dial shall to-morrow note the hour of twelve, so surely shall ye be brought forth—and a wife shall be your lot, or the wuddy your doom."

"Leave me!" cried the youth impatiently, "and the gallows be it—my choice is made. Till my last hour trouble me not again."

"Sir! sir!" cried Simon, "I beg, I pray that ye will alter your determination. There is surely naething so awful in the idea o' marriage, even though your wife should have a face not particularly weel-favoured. Ye dinna ken, sir, but that the young woman's looks are her worst fault; and, indeed, I hae heard her spoken o' as a lassie o' great sense and discretion, and as having an excellent temper; and, oh, sir, if ye kenned as weel what it is to be married as I do, ye would think that a good temper was a recommendation far before beauty."

"Hold thy fool's tongue, Simon," cried the laird; "would ye disgrace the family wi' which ye make it your boast to be connected, when in the power and presence o' its enemies? Do as ye see me do—die and defy them."

It was drawing towards midnight, when the prison-door was opened, and the sentinel who stood watch over it admitted a female dressed as a domestic.

"What want ye, or whom seek ye, maiden?" inquired the laird.

"I come," answered she mildly, "to speak wi' the laird o' Harden, and to ask if he has any dying commands that a poor lassie could fulfil for him."

"Dying commands!" responded Simon; "oh, are those no awful words!—and can ye still be foolhardy enough to say ye winna marry?"

"Who sent ye, maiden?—or who are ye?" continued the laird.

"A despised lassie, sir," answered she, "and an attendant upon Sir Gideon's lady, in whom ye hae a true and steadfast friend; though I doubt that, as ye hae refused poor Meg, her intercession will avail ye little."

"And wherefore has Lady Murray sent you here?" he continued.

"Just, sir, because she is a mother, and has a mother's heart; and, as ye hae a mother and sisters who will now be mourning for ye at Oakwood, she thought that, belike, ye would hae something to say that ye would wish to hae communicated to them; and, if it be sae, I am come to offer to be your messenger."

"Maiden!" said he, with emotion, "speak not of my poor mother, or you will unman me, and I would wish to die as becomes my father's son."

"That's right, hinny," whispered Simon; "speak to him about his mother again—talk about her sorrow, poor lady, and her tears, and distraction, and mourning—and I hae little doubt but that we shall get him to marry Meg, or do onything else, and I shall get back to my family after a'."

"What is it that ye whisper, Simon, in the maiden's ear?" inquired the laird, sternly.

"Oh, naething, sir—naething, I assure ye," answered Simon, falteringly; "I was only saying that, if ye sent her ower to Oakwood wi' a message to your poor, honoured, wretched mother, that she would inquire for my poor widow, Janet, and my bits o' bairns, and that she would tell them that nothing troubled me upon my death-bed—no, no, not my death-bed, but—I declare I am ashamed to think o't!—I was saying that I was simply telling her to inform my wife and bairns, that nothing distracted me in the hour o' death but the thought o' being parted from them."

Without noticing the evasive reply of his dependent and fellow-prisoner, the laird, addressing the intruder, said—"Ye speak as a kind and considerate lassie. I would like to send a scrape o' a pen to my poor mother, and, if ye will be its bearer, she will reward ye."

"And, belike," she replied, "ye would like to hear if the good lady has an answer back, or to learn how she bore the tidings o' your unhappy fate."

"Before you could return," said he, "the time appointed by my adversary for my execution will be past, and I shall feel for my mother's sorrows with the sympathy of a disembodied spirit."

"But," added she, "if you would like to hear from your poor mother, or, belike, to see her—for there may be family matters that ye would wish to have arranged—I think, through the influence of my lady, Sir Gideon could be prevailed upon to grant ye a respite for three or four days; and, as he isna a man that keeps his passion long, perhaps by that time he may be disposed to save your life upon terms that would be more acceptable."

"No, maiden," he replied; "he is my enemy; and from him I wish no terms—no clemency. Let him fulfil his purpose—I will die; but my death shall be revenged; and tell my mother that it was my latest injunction that she should command every follower of our house to avenge her son's death, while there is a Murray left in all Scotland to repent the deed o' the knight o' Elibank."

"Oh, sweet young ma'am, or mistress!" cried Simon; "bear the lady no such message; but rather, as ye hae said, try if it be possible to get your own good lady to persuade Sir Gideon to spare our lives for a few days; and, as ye say, the edge o' the auld knight's revenge may be blunted by that time, or, perhaps, my worthy young maister may be brought to see things in a clearer light, and, perhaps, to marry Miss Margaret, by which means our lives may be spared. For it is certainly the height o' madness in him to sacrifice my life and his own, rather than marry her before he has seen her."

"Simon," interrupted the laird, "the maiden has spoken kindly; let her endeavour to procure a respite—a reprieve

for you. In your death my enemy can have no gratification; but for me—leave me to myself."

"O sir," replied Simon, "ye wrong me—ye mistake my meaning a'thegither. If you are to die, I will die also; but do ye no think it would be as valorous, and mair rational, at least to see and hear the young leddy before ye determine to die rather than to marry her?"

"And hae ye," said the maiden, addressing the laird, "preferred the gallows to poor Meg without even seeing her?"

"If I haena seen her I hae heard o' her," said he; "and by all accounts her countenance isna ane that ony man would desire to see accompanying him through the world like a shadow at his oxter."

"Belike," said the maiden, "she has been represented to you worse than she looks like—if ye saw her, ye might change your opinion; and, perhaps, after a', that she isna bonny is a' that any one can say against her."

"Wheesht, lassie!" said he; "I winna be forced to onything. A Scott may be led, but he winna drive. I have nae wish to see the face o' your young mistress, for I winna hae her. But you speak as one that has a feeling heart, and before I trust ye wi' my last letter to my poor mother, I should like to have a glance at your face, and by your countenance I shall judge whether or not it will be safe to trust ye."

"I doubt, sir," replied she, throwing back the hood that covered her head, "ye will see as little in my features as ye expect to find in my young mistress's to recommend me; but, sir, you ought to remember that jewels are often encrusted in coarser metals, and ye will often find a delicious kernel within an unsightly shell."

"Ye speak sweetly, and as sensibly as sweet," said he, raising the flickering lamp, which burned before them upon a small table, and gazing upon her countenance;

"and I will now tell ye, lassie, that if your features be not beautiful, there is honesty and kindliness written upon every line o' them; and though ye are a dependent in the house o' my enemy, I will trust ye. Try if I can obtain writing materials to address a few lines to my mother, and I will confide in you to deliver them."

"Ye may confide in me," rejoined she, "and the writing materials which ye desire I hae brought wi' me. Write, and not only shall your letter be faithfully delivered, but, as ye hae confided in me, I will venture to say that your life shall be spared until ye receive her answer; for I may say that what I request, Lady Murray will try to see performed. And if I can find any means in my power by which ye can escape, it shall not be lang that ye will remain a prisoner."

"Thank ye!—doubly thank ye!" cried Simon; "ye are a good and a kind creature; and though my maister refuses to marry your mistress, yet, had I been single, I would hae married you. But, oh, when ye go wi' the letter to his mother, my honoured lady, will ye just go away down to a bit white house which lies by the river side, about a mile and a half aboon Selkirk, and there ye will find my poor wife and bairns—or rather, I should say, my unhappy widow and my orphans—and tell them—oh, tell my wife—that I never kenned how dear she was to me till now; but that, if she marries again, my ghost will haunt her night and day; and tell also the bairns that, above everything, I charge them to be good to their mother."

The young laird sat down, and, writing a letter to his mother, intrusted it to the hands of the stranger girl. He raised her hand to his lips as she withdrew, and a tear trickled down his cheeks as he thanked her.

It was early on the following morning that Meikle-mouthed Meg, as she was called, requested an interview

with her father, which being granted, after respectfully rendering obeisance before him, she said—"So, faither, I understand that it is your pleasure that I shall this day become the wife o' young Scott o' Harden. I think, sir, that it is due to the daughter o' a Murray o' Elibank, that she should be courted before she gies her hand. The young man has never seen me; he kens naething concerning me; an' never will yer dochter disgrace ye by gieing her hand to a man who only accepted it to save his neck from a hempen cord. Faither, if it be your command that I am to marry him, I will an' must marry him; but, before I just make a venture upon him for better for worse, an' for life, I wad like to hae some sma' acquaintance wi' him, to see what sort o' a lad he is, and what kind o' temper he has; and therefore, faither, I humbly crave that ye will put off the death or the marriage for a week at least, that I may hae an opportunity o' judging for mysel' how far it would be prudent or becoming in me to consent to be his wife."

"Gie me your hand, Meg," cried the old knight; "I didna think ye had as muckle spirit and gumption in ye as to say what ye hae said. But your request is useless; for he has already, point blank, refused to hae ye; an' there is naething left for him, but, before sunset, to strike his heels against the bark o' the auld elm tree."

"Say not that, faither," said she—"let me at least hae four days to become acquainted wi' him; and if in that time he doesna mak a request to you to marry me without ony dowry, then will I say that I look even waur than I get the name o' doing."

"He shall have four days, Meg," cried the old knight; "for your sake he will have them; but if, at the end o four days, he shall refuse to take ye, he shall hang before this window, and his poor half-crazed companion shall bear him company."

With this assurance Agnes, or, as she was called, Meg left her father, and bethought her of how she might save the prisoners and secure a husband.

The mother of the laird sat in the midst of her daughters, mourning for him, and looking from the window of the tower, as though, in every form that appeared in the distance, she expected to see him, or at least to gather tidings regarding him, when information was brought to her that he was the prisoner of Murray of Elibank.

"Then," cried she, and wept, "the days o' my winsome Willie are numbered, and his death is determined on; for often has Sir Gideon declared he would gie a' the lands o' Elibank for his head. My Willie is my only son, my first-born, and my heart's hope and treasure; and, oh, if I lose him now, if I shall never again hear his kindly voice say '*mother!*' nor stroke down his yellow hair—wi' him that has made me sonless I shall hae a day o' lang and fearfu' reckoning; cauld shall be the hearth-stane in the house o' many a Murray, and loud their lamentation."

Her daughters wept with her for their brother's fate; but they wist not how to comfort her; and, while they sat mingling their tears together, it was announced to them that a humble maiden, bearing a message from the captive laird, desired to speak with her.

"Show her in!—take me to her!" cried the mother, impatiently. "Where is she?—what does she say?—or what does my Willie say?" And the maiden who has been mentioned as having visited the laird in his prison, was ushered into her presence

"Come to me, lassie—come and tell me a'," cried the old lady; "what message does Willie Scott send to his heart-broken mother?"

"He has sent you this bit packet, ma'am," replied the

bearer; "and I shall be right glad to take back to him whatever answer ye may hae to send."

"And wha are ye, young woman?" inquired the lady, "that speaks sae kindly to a mother, an' takes an interest in the fate o' my Willie?"

"A despised lassie," was the reply; "but ane that would risk her ain life to save either yours or his."

"Bless you for the words!" replied Lady Scott, as she broke the seal of her son's letter, and read:—

"My mother, my honoured mother,—Fate has delivered me into the power of Murray of Elibank, the enemy of our house. He has doomed me to death, and I die to-morrow; but sit not down to mourn for me, and uselessly to wring the hands and tear the hair; but rouse every Scott upon the Borders to rise up and be my avenger. If ye bewail the loss o' a son, let them spare o' the Murrays neither son nor daughter. Rouse ye, and let a mother's vengeance nerve your arm! Poor Simon o' Yarrow-foot is to be my companion in death, and he whines to meet his fate with the weakness of a woman, and yearns a perpetual yearning for his wife and bairns. On that account I forgie him the want o' heart and determination which he manifests; but see ye to them, and take care that they be provided for. As for me, I shall meet my doom wi' disdain for my enemy in my eyes and on my tongue. Even in death he shall feel that I despise him; and a proof o' this I have given him already; for he has offered to save my life, providing I would marry his daughter, Meikle-mouthed Meg. But I have scorned his proposal."——

"Ye were right, Willie! ye were right, lad!" exclaimed his mother, while the letter shook in her hand; but, suddenly bursting into tears, she continued—"No, no! my bairn was wrong—very wrong. Life is precious, and at all times desirable; and, for his poor mother's sake, he ought to have married the lassie, whate'er she may be like."

And, turning to the bearer of the letter, she inquired—"And what like may the leddy be, the marrying o' whom would save my Willie's life?"

"Ye have nae doubt heard, my leddy," replied the stranger, "that she isna what the world considers to be a likely lass—though, take her as she is, and ye might find a hantle worse wives than poor Meg would make; and, as to her features, I may say that she looks much the same as I do; and if she doesna appear better, she at least doesna look ony waur."

"Then, if she be as ye say, and look as ye say," continued the lady, "my poor headstrong Willie ought to marry her. But, oh! weel do I ken that in everything he is just his father ower again, and ye might as weel think o' moving the Eildon hills as force him to onything."

She perused the concluding part o' her son's letter, in which he spoke enthusiastically of the kindness shown him by the fair messenger, and of the promise she had made to liberate him if possible. "And if she does," he added, "whatever be her parentage, on the day that I should be free, she should be my wife, though I have preferred death to the hand o' Sir Gideon's *comely* daughter."

"Lassie," said the lady, weeping as she spoke, "my poor Willie talks a deal o' the kindness ye have shown him in the hour o' his distress, and for that kindness his mother's heart thanks ye. But do you not think that it is possible that I could accompany ye to Elibank? and, if ye can devise no means for him to escape, perhaps, if ye could get me admitted into his presence, when he saw his poor distressed mother upon her knees before him, his heart would saften, and he would marry Sir Gideon's daughter, ill-featured though she may be."

"My leddy," answered the stranger maiden, "it is little that I can promise, and less that I can do; but if ye desire

to see yer son, I think I could answer for accomplishing yer request; an' though nae guid micht come oot o't, I could also say that I wad see ye safe back again."

Within an hour, Lady Scott, disguised as a peasant, and carrying a basket on her arm, set out for Elibank, accompanied by the fair stranger.

Leaving them upon their melancholy journey, we shall return to the young laird. From the windows of his prison-house, he beheld the sun rise which was to be the last on which he was to look. He heard the sentinels, who kept watch over him, relieve each other; he heard them pacing to and fro before the grated door, and as the sun rose towards the south, proclaiming the approach of noon, the agitation of Simon increased. He sat in a corner of the prison, and strove to pray; and, as the footsteps of the sentinels quickened, he groaned in the bitterness of his spirit. At length the loud booming of the gong announced that the dial-plate upon the turret marked the hour of twelve. Simon clasped his hands together. "Maister! maister!" he cried, "our hour is come, an' one word from yer lips could save us baith, an' ye winna speak it. The very holding oot o' yer hand could do it, but ye are stubborn even unto death."

"Simon," said the laird, "I hae left it as an injunction upon my mother, that yer wife an' weans be provided for —she will fulfil my request. Therefore, be ye content. Die like a man, an' dinna disgrace both yourself an' me."

"O sir! I winna disgrace, or in any manner dishonour ye," said Simon—"only I do not see the smallest necessity for us to die, and especially when both our lives could be saved by yer doing yerself a good turn."

While he spoke, the sound of the sentinels' footsteps, pacing to and fro, ceased. The prison-door was opened; Simon fell upon his knees—the laird looked towards the intruder proudly.

"Your lives are spared for another day," said a voice, "that the laird o' Harden may have time to reflect upon the proposal that has been made to him. But let him not hope that he will find mercy upon other terms; or that, refusing them for another day, his life will be prolonged."

The door was again closed, and the bolts were drawn. The spirit of Sir Gideon was too proud and impatient to spare the lives of his prisoners for four days, as he had promised to his daughter to do, and he now resolved that they should die upon the following day.

The sun had again set, and the dim lamp shed around its fitful and shadowy lights from the table of the prison-room, when the maiden, who had carried the letter to the laird's mother, again entered.

"This is kind, very kind, gentle maiden," said he; "would that I could reward ye! An' hoo fares it with my puir mother?—what answer does she send?"

"An' oh, ma'am, or mistress!" cried Simon, "hoo fares it wi' my dear wife an' bairns? I hope ye told them all that I desired ye to say. Hoo did she bear the news o' being made a widow? An' what did she say to my injunction that she was never to marry again?"

"Ye talk wildly, man," said the maiden, addressing Simon; it wasna in my power to carry yer commands to yer wife; but, I trust, it will be longer than ye expect before she will be a widow, or hae it in her power to marry again?"

"O ye angel! ye perfect picture!" cried Simon, "what is that which I hear ye say? Do ye really mean to tell me that I stand a chance o' being saved, an' that I shall see my wife an' bairns again?"

"Even so," said she; "but whether ye do or do not, rests with yer master."

"Speak not o' that, sweet maiden," said the laird:

"but tell me, what says my mother? How does she bear the fate o' her son; an' hoo does she promise to avenge my death?"

"She is as one whose heart-strings are torn asunder," was the reply, "and who refuses to be comforted; but she wad rather hae another dochter than lose an only son; an' her prayer is, that ye will live and mak her happy, by marrying the maiden ye despise."

"What!" he cried, "has even my mother so far forgot herself as to desire me to marry the dochter o' oor enemy, whom no other man could be found to take! It shall never be. I wad obey her in onything but that."

"But," said the maiden, "I still think ye are wrong to reject and despise puir Meg before that ye hae seen her. She may baith be better an' look better than ye are aware o'. There are as guid as Scott o' Harden who hae said, that were it in their power they wad mak her their wife; an' ye should remember, sir, that it will be as pleasant for you to hear the blithe laverock singing ower yer head, as for another person to hear the wind soughing and the long grass rustling ower yer grave. Ye hae another day to live, an' see her, an' speak to her, before ye decide rashly. Yours is a cruel doom, but Sir Gideon is a wrathfu' man; an' even for his ain flesh an' bluid he has but sma' compassion when his anger is provoked. Death, too, is an awfu' thing to think aboot; an', therefore, for yer ain sake, an' for the sake o' yer puir distressed mother an' sisters, dinna come to a rash determination."

"Sweet lass," replied he, "I respect the sympathy which ye evince; but never shall Sir Gideon Murray say that, in order to save my life, he terrified me into a marriage wi' his daughter. An' when my puir mother's grief has subsided, she will think differently o' my decision."

"Weel, sir," said the maiden, "since ye will not listen to my advice—an' I own that I hae nae richt to offer it—

I will send ane to ye whose persuasion will hae mair avail."

"Whom will ye send?" inquired the laird; "it isna possible that ye can hae been playing me false?"

"No," she replied, "that isna possible; an' from her that I will send to you, you will see whether or not I hae kept my word, guid and truly, to fulfil yer message."

So saying, she withdrew, leaving him much wondering at her words, and yet more at the interest which she took in his fate. But she had not long withdrawn when the prison-door was again opened, and Lady Scott rushed into the arms of her son.

"My mother!" cried he, starting back in astonishment —"my mother!—hoo is this?"

"Oh, joy an' gladness, an' every blessing be upon my honoured lady! for noo I may stand some chance o' walkin' back upon my ain feet to see my family. Oh! yer leddyship," Simon added, "join yer prayers to my prayers, an' try if ye can persuade my maister to marry Sir Gideon's dochter, an' thereby save baith his life an' mine."

But she fell upon the neck of her son, and seemed not to hear the words which Simon addressed to her.

"O my son! my son!" she cried; "since there is no other way by which yer life can be ransomed, yield to the demand o' the fierce Murray. Marry his daughter an' live —save yer wretched mother's life; for yer death, Willie, wad be mine also."

"Mother!" answered he, vehemently, "I will never accept life upon such terms. I am in Murray's hands, but the day may come—yea, see ye that it does come—when he shall fall into the hands o' the Scotts o' Harden; an' see ye that ye do to him as he shall have done to me. But, tell me, mother, hoo are ye here? Wherefore did ye venture, or hoo got ye permission to see me? Ken ye not

that if he found ye in his power, upon your life also he wad fix a ransom?"

"The kind lassie," she replied, "that brought the letter from ye, at my request conducted me here, and contrived to get me permission to see ye; an' she says that my visit shall not come to the knowledge o' Sir Gideon. But, O Willie! as ye love an' respect the mother that bore ye, an' that nursed ye nicht an' day at her bosom, dinna throw awa yer life when it is in yer power to save it, but marry Miss Murray, an' ye may live, an' so may I, to see many happy days; for, from a' that I hae heard, though not weel-favoured, she is a young lady o' an excellent disposition!"

"Oh! that's richt, my leddy," interrupted Simon; "urge him to marry her, for it would be a dreadfu' thing for him an' I to be gibbeted, as a pair o' perpetual spectacles for the Murrays to mak a jest o'. Ye ken if he does marry, an' if he finds he doesna like her, he can leave her; or he needna live wi' her; or, perhaps, she may soon die; an' ye will certainly agree that marriage, ony way ye tak it, is to be desired, a thousand times ower, before a violent death. Therefore, urge him again, yer leddyship, for he may listen to what ye say, though he despises my words, an' will not hearken to my advice."

"Simon," said the laird, "never shall a Murray hae it in his power to boast that he struck terror into the breast o' a Scott o' Harden. My determination is fixed as fate. I shall welcome my doom, an' meet it as a man. Come, dear mother," he added, "weep not, nor cause me to appear in the presence o' my enemies with a blanched cheek. Hasten to avenge my death, an' think that in yer revenge yer son lives again. Come, though I die, there will be moonlight again."

She hung upon his breast and wept, but he turned away his head and refused to listen to her entrea-

ties. The young maiden again entered the prison, and said—

"Ye must part noo, for in a few minutes Sir Gideon will be astir, an' should he find yer leddyship here, or discover that I hae brought ye, I wad hae sma' power to gie ye protection."

"Fareweel, dear mother!—fareweel!" exclaimed the youth, grasping her hand.

"O Willie! Willie!" she cried, "did I bear ye to see ye come to an end like this! Bairn! bairn! live—for yer mother's sake, live!"

"Fareweel, mother!—fareweel!" he again cried, and the sentinel conducted her from the apartment.

It again drew towards noon. The loud gong again sounded, and Simon sank upon his kees in despair, as the voice of the warder was heard crying—"It is the hour! prepare the prisoners for execution!"

Again the prison-door was opened, and Sir Gideon, with wrath upon his brow, stood before them.

"Weel, youngster," said he, addressing the laird, "yer hour is come. What is yer choice—a wife or the wuddy?"

"Lead me to execution, ye auld knave," answered the laird, scornfully; "an' ken, that wi' the hemp around my neck, in contempt o' you an' yours, I will spit upon the ground where ye tread."

"Here, guards!" cried Sir Gideon; "lead forth William Scott o' Harden to execution. Strap him upon the nearest tree, an' there let him hang until the bauldest Scott upon the Borders dare to cut him down. As for you," added he, addressing Simon, "I seek not your life; depart, ye are free; but beware hoo ye again fall into the hands o' Gideon Murray."

"No, sir!" exclaimed Simon, "though I am free to acknowledge that I hae nae ambition to die before it is the

wise will an' purpose o' nature, yet I winna, I canna leave my dear young maister; an' if he be to suffer, I will share his fate. Only, Sir Gideon, there is ae thing I hae to say, an' that is, that he is young, an' he is proud an' stubborn, like yersel', an' though he will not, o' his ain free will an' accord, nor in obedience to yer commandments, marry yer dochter—is it not possible to compel him, whether he be willing or no, an' so save his life, as it were, in spite o' him?"

"Away with both!" cried the knight, striking his ironed heel upon the ground, and leaving the apartment.

"Then, if it is to be, it must be," said Simon, folding his arms in resignation, "an' there is no help for it! But, oh, maister! maister! ye hae acted foolishly."

They were led from the prison-house, and through the court-yard, towards a tall elm-tree, round which all the retainers of Sir Gideon were assembled to witness the execution; and the old knight took his place upon an elevated seat in the midst of them.

The executioners were preparing to perform their office, when Agnes, or Muckle-mouthed Meg, as she was called, came forth, with a deep veil thrown over her face, and sinking on her knee before the old knight, said, imploringly—"A boon, dear faither—yer dochter begs a simple boon."

"Ye tak an ill season to ask it, Meg," said the knight, angrily; "but what may it be?"

She whispered to him earnestly for a few minutes, during which his countenance exhibited indignation and surprise; and when she had finished speaking, she again knelt before him and embraced his knees.

"Rise, Meg, rise!" said he, impatiently, "for yer sake, an' at yer request, he shall hae another chance to live." And, approaching the prisoner, he added—"William Scott, ye hae chosen death in preference to the hand o'

my dochter. Will ye noo prefer to die rather than marry the lassie that ran wi' the letter to yer mother, an' without my consent brought her to see ye?"

"Had another asked me the question," said the laird, "though I ken not who she is, yet she has a kind heart, and I should hae said 'No,' an' offered her my hand, heart, an' fortune; but to you, Sir Gideon, I only say—do yer worst."

"Then, Willie, my ain Willie!" cried his mother, who at that moment rushed forward, "another does request ye to marry her, an' that is yer ain mother!"

"An'," said Agnes, stepping forward, and throwing aside the veil that covered her face, "puir Meg, ower whom ye gied a preference to the gallows, also requests ye!"

"What!" exclaimed the young laird, grasping her hand, "is the kind lassie that has striven, night and day, to save me—the very Meg that I hae been treating wi' disdain?"

"In troth am I," she replied, "an' do ye prefer the wuddy still?"

"No," answered he; and, turning to Sir Gideon, he added—"Sir, I am now willing that the ceremony end in matrimony."

"Be it so," said the old knight, and the spectators burst into a shout.

The day that began with preparations for death ended in a joyful bridal. The honour of knighthood was afterwards conferred upon the laird; and Meg bore unto him many sons and daughters, and was, as the reader will be ready to believe, one of the best wives in Scotland; while Simon declared that he never saw a better-looking woman in Ettrick Forest, his own wife and daughters not excepted.

LORD DURIE AND CHRISTIE'S WILL.

WHO can journey, now-a-days, along the high parts of Selkirkshire, and hear the mire-snipe whistle in the morass, proclaiming itself, in the silence around, the unmolested occupant of the waste, or descend into the green valley, and see the lazy shepherd lying folded up in his plaid, while his flocks graze in peace around him and in the distance, and not think of the bold spirits that, in the times of Border warfare, sounded the war-horn till it rang in reverberating echoes from hill to hill? The land of the Armstrongs knows no longer their kindred. The hills, ravines, mosses, and muirs, that, only a few centuries ago, were animated by the boldest spirits that ever sounded a war-cry, and defended to the death by men whose swords were their only charters of right, have passed into other hands, and the names of the warlike holders serve now only to give a grim charm to a Border ballad. An extraordinary lesson may be read on the banks of the Liddel and the Esk—there is a strange eloquence in the silence of these quiet dales. Stand for a while among the graves of the chief of Gilnockie and his fifty followers, in the lonely churchyard of Carlenrig—cast a contemplative eye on the roofless tower of that brave riever, then glance at the gorgeous policies of Bowhill, and resist, if you can, the deep sigh that rises as a tribute to the memories of men who, having, by their sleepless spirits, kept a kingdom in commotion, died on the gallows, and left no generation to claim their lands from those who, with less bravery and no better sense of right, had the subtle policy to rise on their ruins. Poorly, indeed, now sound the names of Johnny Armstrong, Sim of Whittram, Sim of the Cathill, Kinmont Willie, or Christie's

Will, besides those of Dukes of Buccleuch and Roxburgh, Scott of Harden, and Elliot of Stobbs and Wells; and yet, without wishing to take away the *merit* or the *extent* of their ancestors' own "reif and felonie," how much do they owe to their succession to the ill-got gear of those hardy Borderers whose names and scarcely credible achievements are all that have escaped the rapacity that, not satisfied with their lands, took also their lives! For smaller depredations, the old laws of the Border—and it would not be fair to exclude those of the present day, not confined to that locality—awarded a halter; for thefts of a larger kind, they gave a title. Old Wat of Buccleuch deserved the honour of "the neck garter" just as much as poor Johnny Armstrong; yet all he got was a reproof and a dukedom.

"Then up and spake the noble king—
And an angry man, I trow, was he—
'It ill becomes ye, bauld Bucclew,
To talk o' reif or felonie;
For, if every man had his ain cow,
A right puir clan yer name would be.'"

There is a change now. The bones of the bold Armstrongs lie in Carlenrig, and the descendants of their brother-rievers who got their lands sit in high places, and speak words of legislative command. But these things will be as they have ever been. We cannot change the world, far less remake it; but we can resuscitate a part of its moral wonders; and, while the property of Christie's Will, the last of the bold Armstrongs, is now possessed by another family, under a written title, we will do well to commit to record a part of his fame.

It is well known that the chief of the family of Armstrongs had his residence* at Mangerton in Liddesdale.

* In a MS. we have seen, as old as the end of the 15th century, "the Laird of Mangerton" is placed at the head of the Liddesdale chiefs—Harden, Buccleuch, and others coming after him in respectful order.

There is scarcely now any trace of his tower, though time has not exerted so cruel a hand against his brother Johnny Armstrong's residence, which lies in the Hollows near Langholme. We know no tumult of the emotions of what may be called antiquarian sentiment, so engrossing and curious as that produced by the headless skeleton of "auld Gilnockie's Tower," as it is seen in the grey gloaming, with a breeze brattling through its dry ribs, and a stray owl sitting on the top, and sending his eldritch screigh through the deserted hollows. The mind becomes busy on the instant with the former scenes of festivity, when "their stolen gear," "baith nolt and sheep," and "flesh, and bread, and ale," as Maitland says, were eaten and drunk with the *kitchen* of a Cheviot hunger, and the sweetness of stolen things; and when the wild spirit of the daring outlaws, with Johnny at their head, made the old tower of the Armstrongs ring with their wassail shouts. This Border turret came—after the execution of Johnny Armstrong, and when the clan had become what was called a broken clan—into the possession of William Armstrong, who figured in the times of Charles I. He was called Christie's Will, though from what reason does not now seem very clear; neither is it at all evident why, after the execution of his forbear, Johnny, and his fifty followers, at Carlenrig, the Tower of Gilnockie was not forfeited to the crown, and taken from the rebellious clan altogether; but, to be sure it was in those days more easy to take a man's life than his property, insomuch as the former needed no guard, while the other would have required a small standing army to keep it and the new proprietor together. Certain, however, it is, that Christie's Will did get possession of the Tower of Gilnockie, where, according to the practice of the family, he lived "on Scottish ground and English kye;" and, when the latter could not easily be had, on the poorer land of his neighbours of Scotland.

This descendant of the Armstrongs was not unlike Johnny; and, indeed, it has been observed that throughout the whole branches of the family there was an extraordinary union of boldness and humour—two qualities which have more connection than may, at first view, be apparent. Law-breakers, among themselves, are seldom serious; a lightness of heart and a turn for wit being necessary for the sustenance of their outlawed spirits, as well as for a quaint justification—resorted to by all the tribe—of their calling, against the laws of the land. In the possession of these qualities, Will was not behind the most illustrious of his race; but he, perhaps, excelled them all in the art of "*conveying*"—a polite term then used for that change of ownership which the affected laws of the time denominated *theft*. This art was not confined to cattle or plenishing, though

> "They left not spindell, spoone, nor speit,
> Bed, boster, blanket, sark, nor sheet:
> John of the Park ryps kist and ark—
> To all sic wark he is sae meet."*

It extended to abduction, and this was far seldomer exercised on damsels than on men, who would be well ransomed, especially of those classes, duke, earl, or baron, any of whom Johnny offered (for his life) to bring, "within a certain day, to his Majesty James V., either quick or dead." This latter part of their art was the highest to which the Borderers aspired; and there never was a riever among them all that excelled in it so much as Christie's Will. "To steal a stirk, or wear a score o' sheep *hamewards*," he used to say, "was naething; but to steal a *lord* was the highest flicht o' a man's genius, and ought never to be lippened to a hand less than an Armstrong's;" and, certainly, if the success with which he executed one

* See Maitland's curious satire on the Border robberies.—Ed.

scheme of that high kind will guarantee Will's boasted abilities, he did not transcend the truth in limiting lord-stealing to the Armstrongs.

Will married a distant relation of the true Border breed, named Margaret Elliot—a lass whose ideas of hussyskep were so peculiar, that she thought Gilnockie and its laird were going to ruin when she saw in the kail-pot a "heugh bane" of their *own* cattle, a symptom of waste, extravagance, and laziness, on the part of her husband, that boded less good than the offer made by "the Laird's Jock," (Johnny Armstrong's henchman,) to give "Dick o' the Cow" a piece of his own ox, which he came to ask reparation for, and, not having got it, tied with St. Mary's knot (hamstringed) thirty good horses. To this good housewife, in fact, might be traced, if antiquaries would renounce for it less important investigations, the old saying, that stolen joys (qu. queys?) are sweetest, undoubtedly a Border aphorism, and now received into the society of legitimate moral sayings. When lazy and not inclined for "felonie," Will would not subscribe to the truth of the dictum, and often got for grace to the dinner he had not taken from the English, and yet relished, the wish of the good dame, that, for his want of spirit, it might choke him. That effect, however, was more likely to be produced by the beef got in the regular Border way; for the laws were beginning now to be more vigorously executed, and many a riever was astonished and offended by the proceedings of the Justice-Ayr at Jedburgh, where they were actually going the length of *hanging* for the crime of *conveying* cattle from one property to another.

It was in vain that Will told his wife these proceedings of the Jedburgh court; she knew very well that many of the Armstrongs, and the famous Johnny among the rest, had been strung up, by the command of their king, for rebellion against his authority; but it was out of all ques-

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tion, beyond the reach of common sense, and, indeed, utterly barbarous and unjust to hang a man, as Gilderoy's lover said, "for gear," a thing that never yet was known to be stationary, but, even from the times of the Old Testament, given to taking to itself wings and flying away. It was, besides, against the oldest constitution of things, the old possessors being the *Tories*, who acted upon the comely principle already alluded to, that right was might—the new lairds, again, being the Whigs, who wished to take from the Tories (the freebooters) the good old law of nature and possession, and regulate property by the mere conceits of men's brains. To some such purpose did Margaret argue against Will's allusions to the doings at Jedburgh; but, secretly, Will cared no more for the threat of a rope, than he did for the empty bravado of a neighbour whom he had eased of a score of cattle. He merely brought in the doings of the Justice-Ayr at Jedburgh, to screen his fits of laziness; those states of the mind common to rievers, thieves, writers, and poets, and generally all people who live upon their wits, which at times incapacitate them for using sword or pen for their honest livelihood. But all Margaret's arguments and Will's courage were on one occasion overturned, by the riever's apprehension for stealing a cow, belonging to a farmer at Stobbs, of the name of Grant. He was carried to Jedburgh jail, and indicted to stand his trial before the Lord Justice-General at the next circuit. There was a determination, on the part of the crown authorities, to make an example of the most inveterate riever of the time, and Will stood a very fair chance of being hanged.

The apprehension of Will Armstrong made a great noise throughout all Liddesdale, producing, to the class of victims, joy, and to the class of spoilers, great dismay; but none wondered more at the impertinence and presumption of the government authorities in attempting thus to dislo-

cate the old Tory principle of "might makes right," than Margaret Elliot; who, as she sat in her turret of Gilnockie, alternately wept and cursed for the fate of her "winsome Will," and, no doubt, there was in the projected condemnation and execution of a man six feet five inches high, with a face like an Adonis, shoulders like a Milo, the speed of Mercury, the boldness of a lion, and more than the generosity of that noble animal, for the crime of stealing a stirk, something that was very apt to rouse, even in those who loved him not so well as did Margaret, feelings of sympathy for his fate, and indignation against his oppressors. There was no keeping, as the artists say, in the picture, no proper causality in a stolen cow, for the production of such an effect as a hanged Phaon or strangled Hercules; and though we have used some classic names to grace our idea, the very same thought, at least as good a one, though perhaps not so gaudily clothed, occupied the mind of Margaret Elliot. She sobbed and cried bitterly, till the Gilnockie ravens and owls, kindred spirits, were terrified from the riever's tower.

"What is this o't?" she exclaimed, in the midst of her tears. "Shall Christie's Will, the bravest man o' the Borders, be hanged because a cow, that kenned nae better, followed him frae Stobbs to the Hollows; and shall it be said that Margaret Elliot was the death o' her braw riever? I had meat enough in Gilnockie larder that day I scorned him wi' his laziness, and forced him to do the deed that has brought him to Jedburgh jail. But I'll awa to the warden, James Stewart o' Traquair, and see if it be the king's high will that a man's life should be ta'en for a cow's."

Making good her resolution, Margaret threw her plaid about her shoulders, and hied her away to Traquair House, the same that still stands on the margin of the Tweed, and raises its high white walls, perforated by numerous Flemish-

shaped windows, among the dark woods of Traquair. When she came to the front of the house, and saw the two stone figures stationed at the old gate, she paused and wondered at the weakness and effeminacy of the Lord High Steward in endeavouring to defend his castle by fearful representations of animals.

"My faith," muttered she to herself, as she approached to request entrance, "the warden was right in no makin' choice o' the figure o' a *quey* to defend his castle." And she could scarcely resist a chuckle in the midst of her tears, at her reference to the cause of her visit.

"Is my Lord Steward at hame?" said she to the servant who answered her call.

"Yes," answered the man; "who is it that wishes to see him?"

"The mistress o' Gilnockie," rejoined Margaret, "has come to seek a guid word for Christie's Will, who now lies in Jedburgh jail for stealing a tether, and I fear may hang for't."

The servant heard this extraordinary message as servants who presume to judge of the sense of their messages ever do, with critical attention, and, after serious consideration, declared that he could not deliver such a message to his lord.

"I dinna want ye to deliver my message, man," said Margaret. "I merely wished to be polite to ye, and show ye a little attention. God be thankit, the mistress o' Gilnockie can deliver her ain errand."

And, pushing the waiting man aside by a sudden jerk of her brawnie arm, she proceeded calmly forward to a door, which she intended to open; but the servant was at her heels, and, laying hold of her plaid, was in the act of hauling her back, when the Warden himself came out, and asked the cause of the affray.

"Is the house yours, my Lord, or this man's?" said

Margaret. "Take my advice, my Lord," (whispering in his ear,) "turn him aff—he's a traitor; would you believe it, my Lord, that, though placed there for the purpose o' lettin' folk into yer Lordship, he actually—ay, as sure as death—tried to keep me oot! Can ye deny it, sir? Look i' my face, and deny it if ye daur!"

The man smiled, and his Lordship laughed; and Margaret wondered at the easy good-nature of a Lord in forgiving such a heinous offence on the part of a servitor.

"If ye're as kind to me as ye are to that rebel," continued Margaret, as she followed his Lordship into his sitting chamber, "Christie's Will winna hang yet."

"What mean you, good woman?" said the Warden. "What is it that you want?"

"As if your Lordship didna ken," answered Margaret, with a knowing look. "Is it likely that a Liddesdale woman frae the Hollows, should ca' upon the great Warden for aught short o' the life and safety o' the man wha's in Jedburgh jail?" (Another Scotch wink.)

"I am still at a loss, good woman," said the Warden.

"At a loss!" rejoined Margaret. "What! doesna a' the Forest,* and Teviotdale and Tweeddale to boot, ken that Christie's Will is in Jedburgh jail?"

"I know, I know, good dame," replied the Warden, "that that brave riever is in prison; but I thought his crime was the stealing of a cow, and not a tether, as I heard you say to my servant."

"Weel, weel—the cow may have been at the end o' the tether," replied Margaret.

"She is a wise woman who concealeth the *extremity* of her husband's crime," replied Lord Traquair, with a smile, "But what wouldst thou have me to do?"

"Just to save Christie's Will frae the gallows, my Lord," answered Margaret. And, going up close to his Lordship,

* Selkirkshire.

and whispering in his ear—"And sometimes a Lord needs a lift as weel as ither folk. If there's nae buck on Traquair when your Lordship has company at the castle, you hae only to gie Christie's Will a nod, and there will be nae want o' venison here for a month. There's no a stouthriever in a' Liddesdale, be he baron or bondsman, knight or knave, but Christie's Will will bring to you at your Lordship's bidding, and a week's biding; and if there's ony want o' a braw leddie," (speaking low,) "to keep the bonny house o' Traquair in order, an' she canna be got for a carlin keeper, a wink to Christie's Will will bring her here, unscathed by sun or wind, in suner time than a priest could tie the knot, or a lawyer loose it. Is sic a man a meet burden for a fir wuddy, my Lord?"

"By my faith, your husband hath good properties about him," replied Traquair. "There is not one in these parts that knoweth not Christie's Will; but I fear it is to that fame he oweth his danger. He is the last of the old Armstrongs; and there is a saying hereaway, that

'Comes Liddesdale's peace
When Armstrongs cease;'

and since, good dame, it would ill become the King's Warden to let slip the noose that is to catch peace and order for our march territories, yet Will is too noble a fellow for hanging. Go thy ways. I'll see him—I'll see him."

"Hech na, my Lord," answered Margaret; "I'll no budge frae this house till ye say ye'll save him this ance. I'll be caution and surety for him mysel,' that he'll never again dine in Gilnockie on another man's surloins. His clan has been lang a broken ane; but I am now the head o't, and it has aye been the practice in our country to make the head answer for the rest o' the body."

"Well, that is the practice of the hangman at Jedburgh," replied Traquair, laughing. "But go thy ways. Will

shall not hang yet. He hath a job to do for me. There's a 'lurdon'* of the north he must steal for me. I'll take thy bond."

"Gie me your hand then, my Lord," said the determined dame; "and the richest lurdon o' the land he'll bring to your Lordship, as surely as he ever took a Cumberland cow—whilk, as your Lordship kens, is nae rieving."

Traquair gave the good dame his hand, and she departed, wondering, as she went, what the Lord Warden was to do with a stolen lurdon. A young damsel might have been a fair prize for the handsome baron; but an "auld wife," as she muttered to herself, was the most extraordinary object of rieving she had ever heard of, amidst all the varieties of a Borderer's prey. Next day Traquair mounted his horse, and—

"Traquair has riden up Chaplehope,
An' sae has he doun by the Grey-Mare's-Tail;
He never stinted the light gallop,
Until he speered for Christie's Will."

Having arrived at Jedburgh, he repaired direct to the jail, where Margaret had been before him, to inform her husband that the great Lord Warden was to visit him, and get him released; but upon the condition of stealing away a lurdon in the north—a performance, the singularity of which was much greater than the apparent difficulty, unless, indeed, as Will said, she was a bedridden lurdon, in which case, it would be no easy matter to get her conveyed, as horses were the only carriers of stolen goods in those days. But the wonder why Traquair should wish to steal away an old woman had perplexed the wits of Will and his wife to such an extent, that they had recourse to

* It has been attempted to derive this word from "Lord," (paper lord); but we have no faith in the etymology; it was, however, often applied to the wigged and gowned judges, as being, in their appearance, more like women than men—for "lurdon," though applied to a male, is generally used for a lazy woman.—Ed.

the most extraordinary hypotheses; supposing at one time that she was some coy heiress of seventy summers, who had determined to be carried off after the form of young damsels in the times of chivalry; at another, that she was the parent of some lord, who could only be brought to concede something to the Warden by the force of the impledgment of his mother; and, again, that she was the duenna of an heiress, who could only be got through the confinement of the old hag. Be who she might, however, Christie's Will declared, upon the faith of the long shablas of Johnny Armstrong, that he would carry her off through fire and water, as sure as ever Kinmont Willie was carried away by old Wat of Buccleuch from the Castle of Carlisle.

"Oh, was it war-wolf in the wood,
Or was it mermaid in the sea,
Or was it maid or lurdon auld,
He'd carry an' bring her bodilie."

Such was the heroic determination to which Christie's Will had come, when the jailor came and whispered in his ear, that the Lord Warden was in the passage on the way to see him. Starting to his feet, the riever was prepared to meet the baron, of whom he generally stood in so much awe in his old tower of Gilnockie, but who came to him now on a visit of peace.

"Thou'lt hang, Will, this time," said the Warden, with an affectation of gruffness, as he stepped forward. "It is not in the power of man to save ye!"

"Begging yer Lordship's pardon," replied Will, "I believe it, however, to be in the power o' a woman. The auld lurdon will be in Gilnockie tower at yer Lordship's ain time."

"And who is the 'auld lurdon?'" replied the Warden, trying to repress a laugh, which forced its way in spite of his efforts.

"Margaret couldna tell me that," said Will; "but many

a speculation we had on the question yer Lordship has now put to me. 'Wha can she be?' said Peggy; and 'Wha can she be?' replied I; but it's for yer Lordship to say wha she *is*, and for me to steal the auld limmer awa, as sure as ever I *conveyed* an auld milker frae the land o' the Nevills. I'm nae sooner free than she's a prisoner."

The familiarity with which Will spoke of the female personage thus destined to durance vile, produced another laugh on the part of the Warden, not altogther consistent, as Will thought, with the serious nature of the subject in hand.

"Where is she, my Lord?" continued Will; "in what fortress?—wha is her keeper?—whar will I tak her, and how long retain her a prisoner?"

"I fear, Will, she is beyond the power o' mortal," said his Lordship, in a serious voice; "but on condition of thy making a fair trial, I will make intercession for thy life, and take the chance of thy success. Much hangeth by the enterprise—ay, even all my barony of Coberston dependeth upon that 'lurdon' being retained three months in a quiet corner of Græme's Tower. Thou knowest the place?"

"Ay, weel, weel," replied Will, who began to see the great importance of the enterprise, while his curiosity to know who the object was had considerably increased. "That tower has its 'redcap sly.' E'en Lord Soulis' Hermitage is no better guarded. Ance there, and awa wi' care, as we say o' Gilnockie as a rendezvous for *strayed* steers. But who is she, my Lord?"

"Thou hast thyself said she is a woman," replied the Warden, smiling, "and I correct thee not. Hast thou ever heard, Will, of fifteen old women—'lurdons,' as the good people call them—that reside in a large house in the Parliament close of Edinburgh?"

"Brawly, brawly," answered Will, with a particular

leer of fun and intelligence; "and weel may I ken the limmers—real lurdons, wi' lang gowns and curches. Ken them! Wha that has a character to lose, or a property to keep against the claims o' auld parchment, doesna ken thae fifteen auld runts? They keep the hail country side in a steer wi' their scandal. Nae man's character is safe in their keeping; and they're sae fu' o' mischief that they hae even blawn into the king's lug that my tower o' Gilnockie was escheat to the king by the death o' my ancestor, who was hanged at Carlenrig. They say a' the mischief that has come on the Borders sin' the guid auld times, has its beginning in that coterie o' weazened gimmers. Dootless, they're at the root o' the danger o' yer bonny barony o' Coberston. By the rood! I wish I had a dash at their big curches."

"Ay, Will," responded Traquair; "but they're securely lodged in their strong Parliament House, and the difficulty is how to get at them."

"But I fancy ane o' the lurdons will satisfy yer Lordship," said Will, "or do ye want them a' lodged in Græme's Tower? They would mak a bonny nest o' screighing hoolets, if we had them safely under the care o' the sly redcap o' that auld keep: they wad hatch something else than scandal, and leasin-makin, and reports o' the instability o' Border rights, the auld jauds."

"I will be content with one of them," rejoined the Warden.

"Ha! ha! I see, I see," replied Will. "Ane o' the limmers has been sapping and undermining Coberston wi' her hellish scandal. What's the lurdon's name, my Lord?"

"Gibson of Durie," rejoined Traquair.

"Ah! a weel-kenned scandalous runt that," replied Will. "She's the auldest o' the hail fifteen, if I'm no cheated—Leddie President o' the coterie. She spak sair

against me when the King's advocate claimed for his Majesty my auld turret o' Gilnockie. I owe that quean an auld score. How lang do you want her lodged in Græme's Tower?"

"Three months would maybe change her tongue," replied the Warden; "but the enterprise seems desperate, Will."

"Desperate! my Lord," replied the other—"that word's no kenned on the Borders. Is it the doing o't, or the dool for the doing o't, that has the desperation in't?"

"The consequences to you would be great, Will," said Traquair. "You are confined here for stealing a cow, and would be hanged for it if I did not save ye. Our laws are equal and humane. For stealing a cow one may be hanged; but there's no such law against stealing a paper-lord."

"That shows the guid sense o' our lawgivers," replied Will, with a leer on his face. "The legislator has wisely weighed the merits o' the twa craturs; yet, were it no for your case, my Lord, I could wish the law reversed. I wad be in nae hurry stealing ane o' thae cummers, at least for my ain use; and, as for Peggy, she would rather see a cow at Gilnockie ony day."

"Weel, Will," said his Lordship, "I do not ask thee to steal for me old Leddie Gibson. I dare not. You understand me; but I am to save your life; and I tell thee that, if that big-wigged personage be not, within ten days, safely lodged in Græme's Tower, my lands of Coberston will find a new proprietor, and your benefactor will be made a lordly beggar."

"Fear not, my Lord," replied Will. "I'm nae suner out than she's in. She'll no say a word against Coberston for the next three months, I warrant ye. But, by my faith, it's as teuch a job as boilin' auld Soulis in the cauldron at the Skelfhill; and I hae nae black spae-book like

Thomas to help my spell. Yet, after a', my Lord, what spell is like the wit o' man, when he has courage to act up to't!"

The Warden acknowledged the truth of Will's heroic sentiment; and, having satisfied himself that the bold riever would perform his promise, he departed, and in two days afterwards the prisoner was liberated, and on his way to his residence at the Hollows. It was apparent, from Will's part of the dialogue, that he had some knowledge of the object the Lord Warden had in view in carrying off a Lord of Session from the middle of the capital; yet it is doubtful if he troubled himself with more than the fact of its being the wish of his benefactor that the learned judge should be for a time confined in Græme's Tower; and, conforming to a private hint of his Lordship before he departed from the jail, he kept up in his wife Margaret's mind the delusion that it was truly "an auld lurdon" whom he was to steal, as a condition for getting out of prison. On the morning after his arrival at Gilnockie, Will held a consultation with two tried friends, whose assistance he required in this most extraordinary of all the rieving expeditions he had ever yet been engaged in; and the result of their long sederunt was, that, within two hours after, the three were mounted on as many prancing Galloways, and with a fourth led by a bridle, and carrying their provisions, a large cloak, and some other articles. They took the least frequented road to the metropolis of Scotland. Having arrived there, they put up their horses at a small hostelry in the Grassmarket; and, next day, Will, leaving his friends at the inn, repaired to that seat of the law and learning of Scotland, where the "hail fifteen" sat in grim array, munching, with their toothless jaws, the thousand scraps of Latin law-maxims (borrowed from the Roman and feudal systems) which then ruled the principles of judicial proceedings in Scotland.

Planting himself in one of the litigants' benches—a line of seats in front of the semicircle where the fifteen Lords sat—the Liddesdale riever took a careful survey of all the wonders of that old laboratory of law. The first objects that attracted his attention, were, of course, the imposing semicircular line of judges, no fewer than fifteen (almost sufficient for a small standing army for puny Scotland in those days), who, wigged and robed, sat and nodded and grinned, and munched their chops in each other's faces, with a most extraordinary regularity of mummery, which yielded great amusement to the stalworth riever of the Borders. Their appearance in the long gowns, with sleeves down to the hands, wigs whose lappets fell on their breasts, displaying many a line of crucified curl, and white cambric cravats falling from below their gaucy double-chins on their bosoms, suggested at once the appellation of lurdons, often applied to them in those days, and now vivid in the fancy of the staring Borderer, whose wild and lawless life was so strangely contrasted with that of the drowsy, effeminate-looking individuals who sat before him. He understood very little of their movements, which had all the regularity and ceremony of a raree-show. One individual (the macer) cried out, at intervals, with a cracked voice, some words he could not understand; but the moment the sound had rung through the raftered hall, another species of wigged and robed individuals (advocates) came forward, and spoke a strange mixture of English and Latin, which Will could not follow; and, when they had finished, the whole fifteen looked at each other, and then began, one after another, but often two or three at a time, to speak, and nod, and shake their wigs, as if they had been set agoing by some winding-up process on the part of the advocates. Not one word of all this did Will understand; and, indeed, he cared nothing for such mummery, but ever and anon fixed his keen eye

on the face of the middle senator, with an expression that certainly never could have conveyed the intelligence that that rough country-looking individual meditated such a thing as an abduction of the huge incorporation of law that sat there in so much state and solidity.

"Ha! ha! my old lass," said Will to himself; "ye little ken that the Laird o' Gilnockie, whom ye tried to deprive of his birthright, sits afore ye; and will a' the lear 'neath that big wig tell ye that that same Laird o' Gilnockie sits here contriving a plan to run awa wi' ye? Faith, an' it's a bauld project; but the baulder the bonnier, as we say in Liddesdale. I only wish I could tak her wig and gown wi' her—for, if the lurdon were seen looking out o' Græme's Tower, wi' that lang lappet head-gear, there would be nae need o' watch or ward to keep her there."

Will had scarcely finished his monologue, when he heard the macer cry out, "Maxwell against Lord Traquair;" then came forward the advocates, and shook their wigs over the bar, and at length old Durie, the President, said, in words that did not escape Will's vigilant ear—

"This case, I believe, involves the right to the large barony of Coberston. Seven of my brethren, you are aware, have given their opinions in favour of the defendant, Lord Traquair, and seven have declared for the pursuer, Maxwell. My casting vote must, therefore, decide the case, and I have been very anxious to bring my mind to a conclusion on the subject, with as little delay as possible; but there are difficulties which I have not yet been able to surmount.")

"Ay, and there's a new ane here, sittin' afore ye," muttered Will, "maybe the warst o' them a'."

"I still require some new lights," continued the judge. "I have already, as the case proceeded, partially announced an opinion against Lord Traquair; but I wish confirmation before I pronounce a judgment that is to have the

effect of turning one out of possession of a large barony. I am sorry that my learned friends at the bar have not been able to relieve me of my scruples."

"Stupid fules," muttered Will; "but I'll relieve ye, my Lord Durie. It'll ne'er be said that a Lord o' Session stood in need o' relief, and a Border riever in the court, wha has a hundred times made the doubtin' stirk tak ae road (maybe Gilnockie-ways) in preference to anither."

The Traquair case being the last called that day, the court broke up, and the judges, followed still by the eye of Christie's Will, retired into the robing-room to take off their wigs and gowns. The Borderer now inquired, in a very simple manner, at a macer, at what door the judges came out of the court, as he was a countryman, and was curious to see their Lordships dressed in their usual every-day clothes. The request was complied with; and Will, as a stupid gazing man from the Highlands, who wished to get an inane curiosity gratified by what had nothing curious in it, was placed in a convenient place to see the Solomons pass forth on their way to their respective dwellings. They soon came; and Will's lynx eye caught, in a moment, the face of the President, whom, to his great satisfaction, he now found to be a thin, spare, portable individual, and very far from the unwieldy personage which his judge's dress made him appear to be when sitting on the bench—a reversing of the riever's thoughts, in reference to the spareness and fatness of his object of seizure, that brought a twinkle to his eye in spite of the serious task in which he was engaged. Forth went the President with great dignity, and Christie's Will behind him, dogging him with the keen scent of a sleuth-hound. To his house in the Canongate he slowly bent his steps, ruminating as he went, in all likelihood, upon the difficulties of the Traquair case, from which his followers were so anxious to relieve him. Will saw him ascend the steps

and enter, and his next object was to ascertain at what time he took his walk, and to what quarter of the suburbs he generally resorted; but on this point he could not get much satisfaction, the good judge being in his motions somewhat irregular, though (as Will learned) seldom a day passed without his having recourse to the country in some direction or other. Will, therefore, set a watch upon the house. Another of his friends held the horses at the foot of Leith Wynd, while he himself paced between the watchman and the top of the passage, so that he might have both ends of the line always in his eye. A concerted whistle was to regulate their movements.

The first day passed without a single glimpse being had of the grave senator, who was probably occupied in the consultation of legal authorities, little conscious of the care that was taken about his precious person by so important an individual as the far-famed Christie's Will of Gilnockie. On the second day, about three of the afternoon, and two hours after he had left the Parliament House, a whistle from Will's friend indicated that the grave judge was on the steps of his stair. Will recognised him in an instant, and, despatching his friend to him who held the horses at the foot of the Wynd, with instructions to keep behind him at a distance, he began to follow his victim slowly, and soon saw with delight that he was wending his senatorial steps down towards Leith. The unconscious judge seemed drowned in study: his eyes were fixed on the ground; his hands placed behind his back; and, ever and anon, he twirled a gold-headed cane that hung suspended by a silken string from one of his fingers. Will was certain that he was meditating the fall of Coberston, and the ruin of his benefactor, Traquair; and, as the thought rose in his mind, the fire of his eye burned brighter, and his resolution mounted higher and higher, till he could even have seized his prey in Leith lane, and carried him

off amidst the cries of the populace. But his opportunity was coming quicker than he supposed. To enable him to get deeper and deeper into his brown study, Durie was clearly bent upon avoiding the common road where passengers put to flight his ideas; and, turning to the right, went up a narrow lane, and continued to saunter on till he came to that place commonly known by the name of the Figgate Whins. In that sequestered place, where scarcely an individual was seen to pass in an hour, the deep thinking of the cogitative senator might trench the soil of the law of prescription, turn up the principle which regulated tailzies under the second part of the act 1617, and bury Traquair's right to Coberston. No sound but the flutter of a bird, or the moan of the breaking waves of the Frith of Forth, could there interfere with his train of thought. Away he sauntered, ever turning his gold-headed cane, and driving his head farther and farther into the deep hole where, like the ancient philosopher, he expected to find truth. Sometimes he struck his foot against a stone, and started and looked up, as if awakened from a dream; but he was too intent on his study to take the pains to make a complete turn of his wise head, to see if there was any one behind him. During all this time, a regular course of signals was in progress among Will and his friends who were coming up behind him, the horses being kept far back, in case the sound of their hoofs might reach the ear of the day-dreamer. He had now reached the most retired and lonely part of the common, where, at that time, there stood a small clump of trees at a little distance from the whin-road that gave the place its singular name. His study still continued, for his head was still bent, and he looked neither to the right nor to the left. In a single instant, he was muffled up in a large cloak, a hood thrown over his face, and his hands firmly bound by a cord. The operation was that of a moment—finished

before the prisoner's astonishment had left him power to open his mouth. A whistle brought up the horses; he was placed on one of them with the same rapidity; a cord was passed round his loins and bound to the saddle; and, in a few minutes, the party was in rapid motion to get to the back part of the city.*

During all this extraordinary operation, not a single word passed between the three rievers, to whom the proceeding was, in a great degree, perfectly familiar. Through the folds of the hood of the cloak in which the President's head was much more snugly lodged than it ever was in his senatorial wig, he contrived to send forth some muffled sounds, indicating, not unnaturally, a wish to know what was the meaning and object of so extraordinary a manœuvre. At that time, be it understood, the belief in the power of witches was general, and Durie himself had been accessary to the condemnation of many a wise woman who was committed to the flames; but though he had, to a great extent, emancipated his strong mind from the thraldom of the prevailing prejudice, the mode in which he was now seized—in broad day, in the midst of a legal study, without seeing a single individual (his head being covered first), and without hearing the sound of man's voice—would have been sufficient to bring him back to the general belief, and force the conviction that he was now in the hands of the agents of the Devil. It is, indeed, a fact (afterwards ascertained), that the learned judge did actually conceive that he was now in the power of those he had helped to persecute; and his fears—bringing up before him the burning tar-barrels, the paid prickers, the roaring crowds, and the expiring victim—completed the delusion, and bound up his energies, till he was speechless and motionless. There was,

* This famous abduction was reported by Lord Fountainhall. Every circumstance is literally true.—Ed.

therefore, no cause of apprehension from the terror-struck prisoner himself; and, as the party scoured along, they told every inquiring passenger on the way (for they were obliged, in some places, to ask the road) that they were carrying an auld lurdon to Dumfries, to be burnt for exercising the power of her art on the innocent inhabitants of that district. It was, therefore, no uncommon thing for Durie to hear himself saluted by all the appellations generally applied to the poor persecuted class to which he was supposed to belong.

"Ay, awa wi' the auld limmer," cried one, "and see that the barrels are fresh frae Norraway, and weel-lined wi' the bleezing tar."

"Be sure and prick her weel," cried another; "the foul witch may be fireproof. If she winna burn, boil her like Meg Davy at Smithfield, or Shirra Melville on the hill o' Garvock."

These cries coming on the ear of the astonished judge, did not altogether agree with his preconceived notions of being committed to the power of the Evil One; but they tended still farther to confuse him, and he even fancied at times that the vengeance of the populace, which thus rung in his ears, was in the act of being realized, and that he was actually to suffer the punishment he had so often awarded to others. Some expressions wrung from him by his fear, and overheard by the quick ear of Will, gave the latter a clue to the workings of his mind, and he did not fail to see how he might take advantage of it. As night began to fall, they had got far on their way towards Moffat, and, consequently, far out of danger of a pursuit and a rescue. Durie's horse was pricked forward at a speed not inconsistent with his power of keeping the saddle. They stopped at no baiting place, but kept pushing forward, while the silence was still maintained, or, if it ever was broken, it was to introduce, by interlocutory

snatches of conversation, some reference to the doom which awaited the unhappy judge. The darkness in which he was muffled, the speed of his journey, the sounds and menaces that had met his ear, all co-operating with the original sensations produced by his mysterious seizure, continued to keep alive the terrors he at first felt, to overturn all the ordinary ideas and feelings of the living world, and to sink him deeper and deeper in the confusion that had overtaken his mind in the midst of his legal reverie at the Figgate Whins.

The cavalcade kept its course all next day, and, towards the evening, they approached Græme's Tower, a dark, melancholy-looking erection, situated on Dryfe Water, not very distant from the village of Moffat. In a deep cell of this old castle the President of the Court of Session was safely lodged, with no more light than was supplied by a small grating, and with a small supply of meat, only sufficient to allay at first the pangs of hunger. Will having thus executed his commission, sat down and wrote on a scrap of paper these expressive words—"The brock's in the pock!" and sent it with one of his friends to Traquair House. The moment the Earl read the scrawl, he knew that Will had performed his promise, and took a hearty laugh at the extraordinary scheme he had resorted to for gaining his plea. It was not yet, however, his time to commence his proceedings; but, in a short while after the imprisonment of the President, he set off for Edinburgh, which town he found in a state of wonder and ferment at the mysterious disappearance of the illustrious Durie. Every individual he met had something to say on the subject; but the prevailing opinion was, that the unhappy President had ventured upon that part of the sands near Leith where the incoming tide usually encloses, with great rapidity, large sand-banks, and often overwhelms helpless strangers who are unacquainted with the manner in which

the tide there flows. Numbers of people had exerted themselves in searching all the surrounding parts, and some had traversed the whole coast from Musselburgh to Cramond, in the expectation of finding the body upon the sea-shore. But all was in vain: no President was found; and a month of vain search and expectation having passed, the original opinion settled down into a conviction that he had been drowned. His wife, Lady Durie, after the first emotions of intense grief, went, with her whole family, into mourning; and young and old lamented the fate of one of the most learned judges and best men that ever sat on the judgment-seat of Scotland.

There was nothing now to prevent Traquair from reaping the fruits of his enterprise. He pressed hard for a judgment in his case; and pled that the fourteen judges having been equally divided, he was entitled to a decision in his favour as *defender*. This plea was not at that time sustained; but a new president having been appointed, who was favourable to his side of the question, the case was again to be brought before the court, and the Earl expected to carry his point, and reap all the benefit of Will's courage and ingenuity.

Meantime, the dead-alive President was closely confined in the old tower of Græme, and had never recovered from the feelings of superstition which held the sovereign power of his mind at the time of his confinement. He never saw the face of man, his food being handed into him by an unseen hand, through a small hole at the foot of the door. The small grating was not situated so as to yield him any prospect; and the only sounds that greeted his ears were the calls of the shepherds who tended their sheep in the neighbouring moor. Sometimes he heard men's voices calling out "Batty!" and anon a female crying "Maudge!" The former was the name of a shepherd's dog, and the latter was the name of the cat belonging to an old woman

who occupied a small cottage adjoining to the tower. Both the names sounded strangely and ominously in the ears of the President, and sorely did he tax his wits as to what they implied. Every day he heard them, and every time he heard them he meditated more and more as to the species of beings they denominated. Still remaining in the belief that he was in the hands of evil powers, he imagined that these strange names, Batty and Maudge, were the earthly titles of the two demons that held the important authority of watching and tormenting the President of the Court of Session. He had heard these often, and suffered so much from their cruel tyranny, that he became nervous when the ominous sounds struck on his ear, and often (as he himself subsequently admitted) he adjured heaven, in his prayers, to take away Maudge and Batty, and torment him no longer by their infernal agency. "Relieve me, relieve me, from these conjunct and confident spirits, cruel Maudge and inexorable Batty," (he prayed,) "and any other punishment due to my crimes I will willingly bear." Exorcisms in abundance he applied to them, and used many fanciful tricks of demon-expelling agency to free him from their tyranny; but all to no purpose. The names still struck his ear in the silence of his cell, and kept alive the superstitious terror with which he was enslaved.

Traquair, meanwhile, pushed hard for a decision, and, at last, after a period of about three months, the famous cause was brought before the court, and the successor of the dead-alive President having given his vote for the defender, the wily Warden carried his point, and secured to him and his heirs, in time coming, the fine barony in dispute, which, for aught we know to the contrary, is in the family to this day.

It now remained for the actors in this strange drama to let free the unhappy Durie, and relieve him from the

power of his enemies. The Warden accordingly despatched a messenger to Christie's Will, with the laconic and emphatic demand—"Let the brock out o' the pock"—a return of Will's own humorous message, which he well understood. Will and his associates accordingly went about the important deliverance in a manner worthy of the dexterity by which the imprisonment had been effected. Having opened the door of his cell, they muffled him up in the same black cloak in which he was enveloped at the Figgate Whins, and leading him to the door, placed him on the back of a swift steed, while they mounted others, with a view to accompany him. Setting off at a swift pace, they made a circuit of the tower in which he had been confined, and continuing the same circuitous route round and round the castle for a period of two or three hours, they stopped at the very door of his cell from which they had started. They then set him down upon the ground, and again mounting their horses, took to their heels, and never halted till they arrived at Gilnockie.

On being left alone, Durie proceeded to undo the cords by which the cloak was fastened about his head; and, for the first time after three months, breathed the fresh air and saw the light of heaven. He had ridden, according to his own calculation, about twenty miles; and, looking round him, he saw alongside of him the tower of Græme, an old castle he had seen many years before, and recollected as being famous in antiquarian reminiscence. The place he had been confined in must have been some castle twenty miles distant from Græme's Tower—a circumstance that would lead him, he thought, to discover the place of his confinement, though he was free to confess that he was utterly ignorant of the direction in which he had travelled. Thankful for his deliverance, he fell on his knees, and poured out a long prayer of gratitude for being thus freed from his enemies, Batty and Maudge. The distance

he had travelled must have taken him far away from the regions of their influence—the most grateful of all the thoughts that now rose in his wondering mind. No more would these hated names strike his ear with terror and dismay, and no more would he feel the tyranny of their demoniac sway. As these thoughts were passing through his mind a sound struck his ear.

"Hey, Batty, lad!—far yaud, far yaud!" cried a voice by his side.

"God have mercy on me! here again," ejaculated the president.

"Maudge, ye jaud!" cried another voice, from the door of a poor woman's cottage.

The terrified president lifted his eyes, and saw a goodly shepherd, with a long staff in his hand, crying to his dog, Batty, to drive his sheep to a distance; and, a little beyond, a poor woman sat at her door, looking for her black cat, that sat on the roof of the cottage, and would not come down for all the energies of her squeaking voice.

"What could all this mean?" now ejaculated Durie. "Have I not been for three months tortured with these sounds, which I attributed to evil spirits? I have ridden from them twenty miles, and here they are again, in the form of fair honest denominations of living animals. I am in greater perplexity than ever. While I thought them evil spirits, I feared them as such; but now, God help me, they have taken on the forms of a dog and cat, and this shepherd and this old woman are kindred devils, under whose command they are. What shall I do, whither run to avoid them, since twenty miles have been to them as a flight in the air?"

"It's a braw morning, sir," said the shepherd. "How far hae ye come this past night?—for I ken nae habitation near whar ye may hae rested."

"It's seldom we see strangers hereawa," said the old woman, "at this early hour—will ye come in, sir, and rest ye?"

Durie looked first at the one and then at the other, bewildered and speechless. The fair face of nature before him, with the forms of God's creatures, and the sounds of human voices in his ears, were as nothing to recollections and sensations which he could not shake from his mind. He had, for certain, heard these dreadful sounds for three months; he had ridden twenty miles, and now he heard them again, mixed up with the delusive accompaniments of the enticing speeches of a man and a woman. He would fly, but felt himself unable; and, standing under the influence of the charm of his own terrors, he continued to look, first at the shepherd and then at the old woman, in wonder and dismay. The people knew as little what to think of him as he did in regard to them. He looked wild and haggard, his eyes rolled about in his head, his voice was mute; and the cloak, which he had partially unloosed from his head, hung in strange guise down his back, and flapped in the wind. The old castle had its "red cap," a fact known to both the shepherd and the old woman, who had latterly heard strange sounds coming from it. Might not Durie be the spirit in another form? The question was reasonable, and was well answered by the wildly-staring president, who was still under the spell of his terrors.

"Avaunt ye!—avaunt! in the name o' the haly rude o' St. Andrews!" cried the woman, now roused to a state of terror.

The same words were repeated by the simple-minded shepherd, and poor Durie's fears were, if possible, increased; for it seemed that they were now performing some new incantation, whereby he would be again reduced to their power; but he was now in the open air, and why

not take advantage of the opportunity of escaping from their thraldom? The moment the idea started in his mind, he threw from him the accursed cloak, and flew away over the moor as fast as his decayed limbs, inspired by terror, would carry him. As he ran, he heard the old woman clapping her hands, and crying "Shoo, shoo!" as if she had been exorcising a winged demon. After running till he was fairly out of the sights and sounds that had produced in him so much terror, he sat down, and took a retrospect of what had occurred to him during the preceding three months; but he could come to no conclusion that could reconcile all the strange things he had experienced with any supposition based on natural powers. It was certain, however, that he was still upon the earth, and it was probable he was now beyond the power of his evil genius. His best plan, therefore, under all the circumstances, was to seek home, and Lady Durie and his loving family, who would doubtless be in a terrible condition on account of his long absence; and even this idea, pleasant as it was, was qualified by the fear that he might, for aught he knew, have been away, like the laird of Comrie, for many, perhaps a hundred years, and neither Lady Durie, nor friend or acquaintance, would be alive to greet him on his return. Of all this, however, he must now take his chance; and, rising and journeying forward, he came to a house, where he asked for some refreshment by way of charity; for he had nothing in the world to pay for what he required. He was fortunate in getting some relief from the kind woman to whom he had applied, and proceeded to speak to her on various topics with great sense and propriety, as became the ex-President of the Court of Session; but when, to satisfy his scruples, he asked her the day of the month, then the month of the year, and then the year of the Lord, the good woman was satisfied he was mad; and, with a look of pity, recom-

mended him to proceed on his way, and get home as fast as he could.

So on the president went, begging his way from hamlet to hamlet, getting alms from one and news from another, but never gratified with the year of the Lord in which he lived; for, when he put that question, he was uniformly pitied, and allowed to proceed on his way for a madman. He heard, however, several times that President Durie had been drowned in the Frith of Forth, and that a new President of the Court of Session had been appointed in his place. Whether his wife was married again or not, he could not learn, and was obliged to wrestle with this and other fears as he still continued his way to the metropolis. At last Edinburgh came in view, and glad was he to see again the cat's head of old St. Arthur's, and the diadem of St. Giles rearing their heights in the distance. Nearer and nearer he approached the place of his home, happiness, and dignity; but, as he came nearer still, he began to feel all the effects of his supposed demise. Several of his old acquaintances stared wildly at him as they passed, and, though he beckoned to them to stand and speak, they hurried on, and seemed either not to recognize him, or to be terrified at him. At last he met Lord F——, the judge who had sat for many years next to him on the bench; and, running up to him, he held out his hand in kindly salutation, grinning, with his long thin jaws and pallid cheeks, a greeting which he scarcely understood himself. By this time it was about the gloaming, and such was the extraordinary effect produced by his sudden appearance and changed cadaverous look, that his old brother of the bench got alarmed, and fairly took to his heels, as if he had seen a spectre. Undaunted, however, he pushed on, and by the time he reached the Canongate it was almost dark. He went direct to his own house, and peeping through the window, saw Lady Durie sitting by

the fire dressed in weeds, and several of his children around, arrayed in the same style. The sight brought the tears of joy to his eyes, and, forgetting entirely the effect his appearance would produce, he threw open the door, and rushed into the room. A loud scream from the throats of the lady and the children rang through the whole house, and brought up the servants, who screamed in their turn, and some of them fainted, while others ran away; and no one had any idea that the emaciated haggard being before them was other than the grim ghost of Lord President Durie, come from the other world to terrify the good people of this. The confusion, however, soon ceased; for Durie began to speak softly to them, and, taking his dear lady in his arms, pressed her to his bosom in a way that satisfied her that he was no ghost, but her own lord, who, by some mischance, had been spirited away by some bad angels. The children gradually recovered their confidence, and in a short time joy took the place of fear, and all the neighbourhood was filled with the news that Lord Durie had come alive again, and was in the living body in his own house. Shortly after the good lord sat down by the fire and got his supper, and, by the quantity he ate, satisfied his lady and family still more that he carried a good body, with as fair a capability of reception as he ever exhibited after a walk at the Figgate Whins. He told them all he had undergone since first he was carried away, not forgetting the two spirits, Batty and Maudge, that had tormented him so cruelly during the period of his enchantment. The lady and family stared with open mouths as they heard the dreadful recital; but a goodly potation of warm spiced wine drove off the vapours produced by the dismal story, and, by-and-by, Lord Durie and his wife retired to bed—the one weary and exhausted with his trials, and the other with her terrors and her joys.

RECOLLECTIONS OF BURNS.*

CHAPTER I.

"Wear we not graven on our hearts
The name of Robert Burns!"—*American Poet.*

THE degrees shorten as we proceed from the higher to the lower latitudes—the years seem to shorten in a much greater ratio as we pass onward through life. We are almost disposed to question whether the brief period of storms and foul weather that floats over us with such dream-like rapidity, and the transient season of flowers and sunshine that seems almost too short for enjoyment, be at all identical with the long summers and still longer winters of our boyhood, when day after day and week after week stretched away in dim perspective, till lost in the obscurity of an almost inconceivable distance. Young as I was, I had already passed the period of life when we wonder how it is that the years should be described as short and fleeting; and it seemed as if I had stood but yesterday beside the deathbed of the unfortunate Ferguson, though the flowers of four summers and the snows of four winters had now been shed over his grave.

My prospects in life had begun to brighten. I served in the capacity of mate in a large West India trader, the master of which, an elderly man of considerable wealth, was on the eve of quitting the sea; and the owners had already determined that I should succeed him in the charge. But fate had ordered it otherwise. Our seas

* Our author, Hugh Miller, never communicated to the Editor his authority for these "Recollections." Probably it was of the same kind as that possessed by Lucian, Lord Lyttleton, and Walter Savage Lander; but whether so or not, we must at least be well satisfied that the parts of the conversation sustained by the principal interlocutor are true to the genius and character of Burns, and that, however searching the thoughts or beautiful the sentiments, they do not transcend what might have been expected from the Bard himself.—ED.

were infested at this period by American privateers—prime sailors, and strongly armed; and, when homeward bound from Jamaica with a valuable cargo, we were attacked and captured when within a day's sailing of Ireland, by one of the most formidable of the class. Vain as resistance might have been deemed—for the force of the American was altogether overpowering—and though our master, poor old man! and three of the crew, had fallen by the first broadside, we had yet stood stiffly by our guns, and were only overmastered when, after falling foul of the enemy, we were boarded by a party of thrice our strength and number. The Americans, irritated by our resistance, proved on this occasion no generous enemies; we were stripped and heavily ironed, and, two days after, were set ashore on the wild coast of Connaught, without a single change of dress, or a sixpence to bear us by the way.

I was sitting, on the following night, beside the turf fire of a hospitable Irish peasant, when a seafaring man, whom I had sailed with about two years before, entered the cabin. The meeting was equally unexpected on either side. My acquaintance was the master of a smuggling lugger then on the coast; and on acquainting him with the details of my disaster, and the state of destitution to which it had reduced me, he kindly proposed that I should accompany him on his voyage to the west coast of Scotland, for which he was then on the eve of sailing. "You will run some little risk," he said, "as the companion of a man who has now been thrice outlawed for firing on his Majesty's flag; but I know your proud heart will prefer the danger of bad company at its worst, to the alternative of begging your way home." He judged rightly. Before daybreak we had lost sight of land, and in four days more we could discern the precipitous shores of Carrick stretching in a dark line along the horizon, and the hills of the interior rising thin and blue behind, like a volume of

clouds. A considerable part of our cargo, which consisted mostly of tea and spirits, was consigned to an Ayr trader, who had several agents in the remote parish of Kirkoswald, which at this period afforded more facilities for carrying on the contraband trade than any other on the western coast of Scotland; and, in a rocky bay of the parish, we proposed unlading on the following night. It was necessary, however, that the several agents, who were yet ignorant of our arrival, should be prepared to meet with us; and, on volunteering my service for the purpose, I was landed near the ruins of the ancient castle of Turnberry, once the seat of Robert the Bruce.

I had accomplished my object; it was evening, and a party of countrymen were sauntering among the cliffs, waiting for nightfall and the appearance of the lugger. There are splendid caverns on the coast of Kirkoswald; and, to while away the time, I had descended to the shore by a broken and precipitous path, with a view of exploring what are termed the Caves of Colzean, by far the finest in this part of Scotland. The evening was of great beauty; the sea spread out from the cliffs to the far horizon, like the sea of gold and crystal described by the prophet; and its warm orange hues so harmonized with those of the sky, that, passing over the dimly-defined line of demarcation, the whole upper and nether expanse seemed but one glorious firmament, with the dark Ailsa, like a thunder-cloud, sleeping in the midst. The sun was hastening to his setting, and threw his strong red light on the wall of rock which, loftier and more imposing than the walls of even the mighty Babylon, stretched onward along the beach, headland after headland, till the last sank abruptly in the far distance, and only the wide ocean stretched beyond. I passed along the insulated piles of cliff that rise thick along the basis of the precipices—now in sunshine, now in shadow—till I reached the opening of one of the largest

caves. The roof rose more than fifty feet over my head—a broad stream of light, that seemed redder and more fiery from the surrounding gloom, slanted inwards, and, as I paused in the opening, my shadow, lengthened and dark, fell athwart the floor—a slim and narrow bar of black—till lost in the gloom of the inner recess. There was a wild and uncommon beauty in the scene that powerfully affected the imagination; and I stood admiring it in that delicious dreamy mood in which one can forget all but the present enjoyment, when I was roused to a recollection of the business of the evening by the sound of a footfall echoing from within. It seemed approaching by a sort of cross passage in the rock, and, in a moment after, a young man, one of the country people whom I had left among the cliffs above, stood before me. He wore a broad Lowland bonnet, and his plain homely suit of coarse russet seemed to bespeak him a peasant of perhaps the poorest class; but, as he emerged from the gloom, and the red light fell full on his countenance, I saw an indescribable something in the expression that in an instant awakened my curiosity. He was rather above the middle size, of a frame the most muscular and compact I have almost ever seen, and there was a blended mixture of elasticity and firmness in his tread, that to one accustomed, as I had been, to estimate the physical capabilities of men, gave evidence of a union of immense personal strength with great activity. My first idea regarding the stranger—and I know not how it should have struck me—was that of a very powerful frame, animated by a double portion of vitality. The red light shone full on his face, and gave a ruddy tinge to the complexion, which I afterwards found it wanted—for he was naturally of a darker hue than common; but there was no mistaking the expression of the large flashing eyes, the features that seemed so thoroughly cast in the mould of thought, and of the broad, full, perpendicular forehead.

Such, at least, was the impression on my mind, that I addressed him with more of the courtesy which my earlier pursuits had rendered familiar to me, than of the bluntness of my adopted profession. "This sweet evening," I said, "is by far too fine for our lugger; I question whether, in these calms, we need expect her before midnight; but, 'tis well, since wait we must, that 'tis in a place where the hours may pass so agreeably." The stranger, good-humouredly, acquiesced in the remark, and we sat down together on the dry, water-worn pebbles, mixed with fragments of broken shells and minute pieces of wreck, that strewed the opening of the cave.

"Was there ever a lovelier evening!" he exclaimed; "the waters above the firmament seem all of a piece with the waters below. And never surely was there a scene of wilder beauty. Only look inwards, and see how the stream of red light seems bounded by the extreme darkness, like a river by its banks, and how the reflection of the ripple goes waving in golden curls along the roof!"

"I have been admiring the scene for the last half hour," I said; "Shakspeare speaks of a music that cannot be heard, and I have not yet seen a place where one might better learn to comment on the passage."

Both the thought and the phrase seemed new to him.

"A music that cannot be heard!" he repeated; and then, after a momentary pause, "you allude to the fact," he continued, "that sweet music, and forms such as these, of silent beauty and grandeur, awaken in the mind emotions of nearly the same class. There is something truly exquisite in the concert of to-night."

I muttered a simple assent.

"See," he continued, "how finely these insulated piles of rock, that rise in so many combinations of form along the beach, break and diversify the red light, and how the

glossy leaves of the ivy glisten in the hollows of the precipices above! And then, how the sea spreads away to the far horizon, a glorious pavement of crimson and gold! —and how the dark Ailsa rises in the midst, like the little cloud seen by the prophet! The mind seems to enlarge, the heart to expand, in the contemplation of so much of beauty and grandeur. The soul asserts its due supremacy. And, oh! 'tis surely well that we can escape from those little cares of life which fetter down our thoughts, our hopes, our wishes, to the wants and the enjoyments of our animal existence; and that, amid the grand and the sublime of nature, we may learn from the spirit within us that we are better than the beasts that perish!"

I looked up to the animated countenance and flashing eyes of my companion, and wondered what sort of a peasant it was I had met with. "Wild and beautiful as the scene is," I said, "you will find, even among those who arrogate to themselves the praise of wisdom and learning, men who regard such scenes as mere errors of nature. Burnet would have told you that a Dutch landscape, without hill, rock, or valley, must be the perfection of beauty, seeing that Paradise itself could have furnished nothing better."

"I hold Milton as higher authority on the subject," said my companion, "than all the philosophers who ever wrote. Beauty, in a tame unvaried flat, where a man would know his country only by the milestones! A very Dutch Paradise, truly!"

"But would not some of your companions above," I asked, "deem the scene as much an error of nature as Burnet himself? They could pass over these stubborn rocks neither plough nor harrow."

"True," he replied; "there is a species of small wisdom in the world that often constitutes the extremest of its folly; a wisdom that would change the entire nature of

good, had it but the power, by vainly endeavouring to render that good universal. It would convert the entire earth into one vast corn field, and then find that it had ruined the species by its improvement."

"We of Scotland can hardly be ruined in that way for an age to come," I said. "But I am not sure that I understand you. Alter the very nature of good in the attempt to render it universal! How?"

"I daresay you have seen a graduated scale," said my companion, "exhibiting the various powers of the different musical instruments, and observed how some of limited scope cross only a few of the divisions, and how others stretch nearly from side to side. 'Tis but a poor truism, perhaps, to say that similar differences in scope and power obtain among men—that there are minds who could not join in the concert of to-night—who could see neither beauty nor grandeur amid these wild cliffs and caverns, or in that glorious expanse of sea and sky; and that, on the other hand, there are minds so finely modulated—minds that sweep so broadly across the scale of nature, that there is no object, however minute, no breath of feeling, however faint, but that it awakens their sweet vibrations—the snow-flake falling in the stream, the daisy of the field, the conies of the rock, the hysop of the wall. Now, the vast and various frame of nature is adapted not to the lesser, but to the larger mind. It spreads on and around us in all its rich and magnificent variety, and finds the full portraiture of its Proteus-like beauty in the mirror of genius alone. Evident, however, as this may seem, we find a sort of levelling principle in the inferior order of minds, and which, in fact, constitutes one of their grand characteristics—a principle that would fain abridge the scale to their own narrow capabilities—that would cut down the vastness of nature to suit the littleness of their own conceptions and desires, and convert it into one tame, uniform,

médiocre good, which would be *good* but to themselves alone, and ultimately not even that."

"I think I can now understand you," I said; "you describe a sort of swinish wisdom that would convert the world into one vast sty. For my own part, I have travelled far enough to know the value of a blue hill, and would not willingly lose so much as one of these landmarks of our mother land, by which kindly hearts in distant countries love to remember it."

"I daresay we are getting fanciful," rejoined my companion; "but certainly, in man's schemes of improvement, both physical and moral, there is commonly a littleness and want of adaptation to the general good that almost always defeats his aims. He sees and understands but a minute portion—it is always some partial good he would introduce; and thus he but destroys the just proportions of a nicely-regulated system of things by exaggerating one of the parts. I passed of late through a richly-cultivated district of country, in which the agricultural improver had done his utmost. Never were there finer fields, more convenient steadings, crops of richer promise, a better regulated system of production. Corn and cattle had mightily improved; but what had man, the lord of the soil, become? Is not the body better than food, and life than raiment? If that decline for which all other things exist, it surely matters little that all these other things prosper. And here, though the corn, the cattle, the fields, the steadings had improved, man had sunk. There were but two classes in the district: a few cold-hearted speculators, who united what is worst in the character of the landed proprietor and the merchant—these were your gentleman farmers; and a class of degraded helots, little superior to the cattle they tended—these were your farm servants. And for two such extreme classes—necessary result of such a state of things—had this unfortunate,

though highly-eulogized district, parted with a moral, intelligent, high-minded peasantry—the true boast and true riches of their country."

"I have, I think, observed something like what you describe," I said.

"I give," he replied, "but one instance of a thousand. But mark how the sun's lower disk has just reached the line of the horizon, and how the long level rule of light stretches to the very innermost recess of the cave! It darkens as the orb sinks. And see how the gauze-like shadows creep on from the sea, film after film!—and now they have reached the ivy that mantles round the castle of The Bruce. Are you acquainted with Barbour?"

"Well," I said; "a spirited, fine old fellow, who loved his country and did much for it. I could once repeat all his chosen passages. Do you remember how he describes King Robert's rencounter with the English knight?"

My companion sat up erect, and, clenching his fist, began repeating the passage, with a power and animation that seemed to double its inherent energy and force.

"Glorious old Barbour!" ejaculated he, when he had finished the description; "many a heart has beat all the higher when the bale-fires were blazing, through the tutorage of thy noble verses! Blind Harry, too—what has not his country owed to him!"

"Ah, they have long since been banished from our popular literature," I said; "and yet Blind Harry's 'Wallace,' as Hailes tells us, was at one time the very Bible of the Scotch. But love of country seems to be getting old-fashioned among us, and we have become philosophic enough to set up for citizens of the world"

"All cold pretence," rejoined my companion; "an effect of that small wisdom we have just been decrying. Cosmopolitism, as we are accustomed to define it, can be no virtue of the present age, nor yet of the next, nor

perhaps for centuries to come. Even when it shall have attained to its best, and when it may be most safely indulged in, it is according to the nature of man, that, instead of running counter to the love of country, it should exist as but a wider diffusion of the feeling, and form, as it were, a wider circle round it. It is absurdity itself to oppose the love of our country to that of our race."

"Do I rightly understand you?" I said. "You look forward to a time when the patriot may safely expand into the citizen of the world; but, in the present age, he would do well, you think, to confine his energies within the inner circle of country."

"Decidedly," he rejoined; "man should love his species at all times, but it is ill with him if, in times like the present, he loves not his country more. The spirit of war and aggression is yet abroad—there are laws to be established, rights to be defended, invaders to be repulsed, tyrants to be deposed. And who but the patriot is equal to these things? We are not yet done with the Bruces, the Wallaces, the Tells, the Washingtons—yes, the Washingtons, whether they fight for or against us—we are not yet done with them. The cosmopolite is but a puny abortion—a birth ere the natural time, that at once endangers the life and betrays the weakness of the country that bears him. Would that he were sleeping in his elements till his proper time! But we are getting ashamed of our country, of our language, our manners, our music, our literature; nor shall we have enough of the old spirit left us to assert our liberties or fight our battles. Oh, for some Barbour or Blind Harry of the present day, to make us, once more, proud of our country!"

I quoted the famous saying of Fletcher of Salton—"Allow me to make the songs of a country, and I will allow you to make its laws."

"But here," I said, "is our lugger stealing round Turn-

berry Head. We shall soon part, perhaps for ever, and I would fain know with whom I have spent an hour so agreeably, and have some name to remember him by. My own name is Matthew Lindsay; I am a native of Irvine."

"And I," said the young man, rising and cordially grasping the proffered hand, "am a native of Ayr; my name is Robert Burns."

CHAPTER II.

> If friendless, low, we meet together,
> Then, sir, your hand—my friend and brother!
>
> *Dedication to G. Hamilton.*

A light breeze had risen as the sun sunk, and our lugger, with all her sails set, came sweeping along the shore. She had nearly gained the little bay in front of the cave, and the countrymen from above, to the number of perhaps twenty, had descended to the beach, when, all of a sudden, after a shrill whistle, and a brief half minute of commotion among the crew, she wore round and stood out to sea. I turned to the south, and saw a square-rigged vessel shooting out from behind one of the rocky headlands, and then bearing down in a long tack on the smuggler. "The sharks are upon us," said one of the countrymen, whose eyes had turned in the same direction—"we shall have no sport to-night." We stood lining the beach in anxious curiosity; the breeze freshened as the evening fell; and the lugger, as she lessened to our sight, went leaning against the foam in a long bright furrow, that, catching the last light of evening, shone like the milky way amid the blue. Occasionally we could see the flash, and hear the booming of a gun from the other vessel; but the night

fell thick and dark; the waves too began to lash against the rocks, drowning every feebler sound in a continuous roaring; and every trace of both the chase and the chaser disappeared. The party broke up, and I was left standing alone on the beach, a little nearer home, but in every other respect in quite the same circumstances as when landed by my American friends on the wild coast of Connaught. "Another of Fortune's freaks!" I ejaculated; "but 'tis well she can no longer surprise me."

A man stepped out in the darkness as I spoke, from beside one of the rocks; it was the peasant Burns, my acquaintance of the earlier part of the evening.

"I have waited, Mr. Lindsay," he said, "to see whether some of the country folks here, who have homes of their own to invite you to, might not have brought you along with them. But I am afraid you must just be content to pass the night with me. I can give you a share of my bed and my supper, though both, I am aware, need many apologies." I made a suitable acknowledgment, and we ascended the cliff together. "I live, when at home with my parents," said my companion, "in the inland parish of Tarbolton; but, for the last two months, I have attended school here, and lodge with an old widow woman in the village. To-morrow, as harvest is fast approaching, I return to my father."

"And I," I replied, "shall have the pleasure of accompanying you in at least the early part of your journey, on my way to Irvine, where my mother still lives."

We reached the village, and entered a little cottage, that presented its gable to the street, and its side to one of the narrower lanes.

"I must introduce you to my landlady," said my companion, "an excellent, kind-hearted old woman, with a fund of honest Scotch pride and shrewd good sense in her composition, and with the mother as strong in her heart as

ever, though she lost the last of her children more than twenty years ago."

We found the good woman sitting beside a small but very cheerful fire. The hearth was newly swept, and the floor newly sanded; and, directly fronting her, there was an empty chair, which seemed to have been drawn to its place in the expectation of some one to fill it.

"You are going to leave me, Robert, my bairn," said the woman, "an' I kenna how I sall ever get on without you; I have almost forgotten, sin you came to live with me, that I have neither children nor husband." On seeing me, she stopped short.

"An acquaintance," said my companion, "whom I have made bold to bring with me for the night; but you must not put yourself to any trouble, mother; he is, I daresay, as much accustomed to plain fare as myself. Only, however, we must get an additional pint of *yill* from the *clachan;* you know this is my last evening with you, and was to be a merry one at any rate." The woman looked me full in the face.

"Matthew Lindsay!" she exclaimed—"can you have forgotten your poor old aunt Margaret!" I grasped her hand.

"Dearest aunt, this is surely most unexpected! How could I have so much as dreamed you were within a hundred miles of me?" Mutual congratulation ensued.

"This," she said, turning to my companion, "is the nephew I have so often told you about, and so often wished to bring you acquainted with. He is, like yourself, a great reader and a great thinker, and there is no need that your proud, kindly heart should be jealous of him; for he has been ever quite as poor, and maybe the poorer of the two." After still more of greeting and congratulation, the young man rose.

"The night is dark, mother," he said, "and the road to

the clachan a rough one; besides you and your kinsman will have much to say to one another. I shall just slip out to the clachan for you; and you shall both tell me on my return whether I am not a prime judge of ale."

"The kindest heart, Matthew, that ever lived," said my relative, as he left the house; ever since he came to Kirkoswald, he has been both son and daughter to me, and I shall feel twice a widow when he goes away."

"I am mistaken, aunt," I said, "if he be not the strongest minded man I ever saw. Be assured he stands high among the aristocracy of nature, whatever may be thought of him in Kirkoswald. There is a robustness of intellect, joined to an overmastering force of character, about him, which I have never yet seen equalled, though I have been intimate with at least one very superior mind, and with hundreds of the class who pass for men of talent. I have been thinking ever since I met with him, of the William Tells and William Wallaces of history—men who, in those times of trouble which unfix the foundations of society, step out from their obscurity to rule the destiny of nations."

"I was ill about a month ago," said my relative—"so very ill that I thought I was to have done with the world altogether; and Robert was both nurse and physician to me—he kindled my fire, too, every morning, and sat up beside me sometimes for the greater part of the night. What wonder I should love him as my own child? Had your cousin Henry been spared to me, he would now have been much about Robert's age."

The conversation passed to other matters, and in about half an hour, my new friend entered the room; when we sat down to a homely, but cheerful repast.

"I have been engaged in argument, for the last twenty minutes, with our parish schoolmaster," he said—"a shrewd, sensible man, and a prime scholar, but one of the

most determined Calvinists I ever knew. Now, there is something, Mr. Lindsay, in abstract Calvinism, that dissatisfies and distresses me; and yet, I must confess, there is so much of good in the working of the system, that I would ill like to see it supplanted by any other. I am convinced, for instance, there is nothing so efficient in teaching the bulk of a people to think as a Calvinistic church."

"Ah, Robert," said my aunt, "it does meikle mair nor that. Look round ye, my bairn, an' see if there be a kirk in which puir sinful creatures have mair comfort in their sufferings or mair hope in their deaths."

"Dear mother," said my companion, "I like well enough to dispute with the schoolmaster, but I must have no dispute with you. I know the heart is everything in these matters, and yours is much wiser than mine."

"There is something in abstract Calvinism," he continued, "that distresses me. In almost all our researches we arrive at an ultimate barrier, which interposes its wall of darkness between us and the last grand truth, in the series which we had trusted was to prove a master-key to the whole. We dwell in a sort of Goshen—there is light in our immediate neighbourhood, and a more than Egyptian darkness all around; and as every Hebrew must have known that the hedge of cloud which he saw resting on the landscape, was a boundary not to things themselves, but merely to his view of things—for beyond there were cities, and plains, and oceans, and continents—so we in like manner must know that the barriers of which I speak exist only in relation to the faculties which we employ, not to the objects on which we employ them. And yet, notwithstanding this consciousness that we are necessarily and irremediably the bound prisoners of ignorance, and that all the great truths lie outside our prison, we can almost be content that, in most cases, it should be so—

not, however, with regard to those great unattainable truths which lie in the track of Calvinism. They seem too important to be wanted, and yet want them we must—and we beat our very heads against the cruel barrier which separates us from them."

"I am afraid I hardly understand you," I said;—"do assist me by some instance of illustration."

"You are acquainted," he replied, "with the Scripture doctrine of Predestination, and, in thinking over it, in connection with the destinies of man, it must have struck you that, however much it may interfere with our fixed notions of the goodness of Deity, it is thoroughly in accordance with the actual condition of our race. As far as we can know of ourselves and the things around us, there seems, through the will of Deity—for to what else can we refer it?—a fixed, invariable connection between what we term cause and effect. Nor do we demand of any class of mere effects, in the inanimate or irrational world, that they should regulate themselves otherwise than the causes which produce them have determined. The roe and the tiger pursue, unquestioned, the instincts of their several natures; the cork rises, and the stone sinks; and no one thinks of calling either to account for movements so opposite. But it is not so with the family of man; and yet our minds, our bodies, our circumstances, are but combinations of effects, over the causes of which we have no control. We did not choose a country for ourselves, nor yet a condition in life—nor did we determine our modicum of intellect, or our amount of passion—we did not impart its gravity to the weightier part of our nature, or give expansion to the lighter—nor are our instincts of our own planting. How, then, being thus as much the creatures of necessity as the denizens of the wild and forest—as thoroughly under the agency of fixed, unalterable causes, as the dead matter around us—why are

we yet the subjects of a retributive system, and accountable for all our actions?"

"You quarrel with Calvinism," I said; "and seem one of the most thorough-going necessitarians I ever knew."

"Not so," he replied; "though my judgment cannot disprove these conclusions, my heart cannot acquiesce in them—though I see that I am as certainly the subject of laws that exist and operate independent of my will, as the dead matter around me, I feel, with a certainty quite as great, that I am a free, accountable creature. It is according to the scope of my entire reason that I should deem myself bound—it is according to the constitution of my whole nature that I should feel myself free. And in this consists the great, the fearful problem—a problem which both reason and revelation propound; but the truths which can alone solve it, seem to lie beyond the horizon of darkness—and we vex ourselves in vain. 'Tis a sort of moral asymptotes; but its lines, instead of approaching through all space without meeting, seem receding through all space, and yet meet."

"Robert, my bairn," said my aunt, "I fear you are wasting your strength on these mysteries to your ain hurt. Did ye no see, in the last storm, when ye staid out among the caves till cock-crow, that the bigger and stronger the wave, the mair was it broken against the rocks?—it's just thus wi' the pride o' man's understanding, when he measures it against the dark things o' God. An' yet it's sae ordered, that the same wonderful truths which perplex and cast down the proud reason, should delight and comfort the humble heart. I am a lone, puir woman, Robert. Bairns an' husband have gone down to the grave, one by one; an' now, for twenty weary years, I have been childless an' a widow. But trow ye that the puir lone woman wanted a guard, an' a comforter, an' a provider, through a' the lang mirk nichts, an' a' the cauld scarce winters o'

these twenty years? No, my bairn—I kent that Himsel' was wi' me. I kent it by the provision He made, an' the care He took, an' the joy He gave. An' how, think you, did He comfort me maist? Just by the blessed assurance that a' my trials an' a' my sorrows were nae hasty chance matters, but dispensations for my guid, an' the guid o' those He took to Himsel', that, in the perfect love and wisdom o' His nature, He had ordained frae the beginning."

"Ah, mother," said my friend, after a pause, "you understand the doctrine far better than I do! There are, I find, no contradictions in the Calvinism of the heart."

CHAPTER III.

"Ayr, gurgling, kissed his pebbled shore,
O'erhung with wild woods thick'ning green;
The fragrant birch and hawthorn hoar
Twined, amorous, round the raptured scene;

The flowers sprang wanton to be prest,
The birds sang love on every spray—
Till, too, too soon, the glowing west
Proclaimed the speed of winged day."

To Mary in Heaven.

We were early on the road together; the day, though somewhat gloomy, was mild and pleasant, and we walked slowly onward, neither of us in the least disposed to hasten our parting by hastening our journey. We had discussed fifty different topics, and were prepared to enter on fifty more, when we reached the ancient burgh of Ayr, where our roads separated.

"I have taken an immense liking to you, Mr. Lindsay,"

said my companion, as he seated himself on the parapet of the old bridge, "and have just bethought me of a scheme through which I may enjoy your company for at least one night more. The Ayr is a lovely river, and you tell me you have never explored it. We shall explore it together this evening for about ten miles, when we shall find ourselves at the farm-house of Lochlea. You may depend on a hearty welcome from my father, whom, by the way, I wish much to introduce to you, as a man worth your knowing; and, as I have set my heart on the scheme, you are surely too good-natured to disappoint me." Little risk of that, I thought; I had, in fact, become thoroughly enamoured of the warm-hearted benevolence and fascinating conversation of my companion, and acquiesced with the best goodwill in the world.

We had threaded the course of the river for several miles. It runs through a wild pastoral valley, roughened by thickets of copsewood, and bounded on either hand by a line of swelling, moory hills, with here and there a few irregular patches of corn, and here and there some little nest-like cottage peeping out from among the wood. The clouds, which during the morning had obscured the entire face of the heavens, were breaking up their array, and the sun was looking down, in twenty different places, through the openings, checkering the landscape with a fantastic, though lovely carpeting of light and shadow. Before us there rose a thick wood, on a jutting promontory, that looked blue and dark in the shade, as if it wore mourning; while the sunlit stream beyond shone through the trunks and branches, like a river of fire. At length the clouds seemed to have melted in the blue—for there was not a breath of wind to speed them away—and the sun, now hastening to the west, shone in unbroken effulgence over the wide extent of the dell, lighting up stream and wood, and field and cottage, in one continuous blaze

of glory. We had walked on in silence for the last half hour; but I could sometimes hear my companion muttering as he went; and when, in passing through a thicket of hawthorn and honeysuckle, we started from its perch a linnet that had been filling the air with its melody, I could hear him exclaim, in a subdued tone of voice, "Bonny, bonny birdie! why hasten frae me?—I wadna skaith a feather o' yer wing." He turned round to me, and I could see that his eyes were swimming in moisture.

"Can he be other," he said, "than a good and benevolent God, who gives us moments like these to enjoy? Oh, my friend, without these sabbaths of the soul, that come to refresh and invigorate it, it would dry up within us! How exquisite," he continued, "how entire the sympathy which exists between all that is good and fair in external nature, and all of good and fair that dwells in our own! And, oh, how the heart expands and lightens! The world is as a grave to it—a closely-covered grave—and it shrinks, and deadens, and contracts all its holier and more joyous feelings under the cold, earth-like pressure. But, amid the grand and lovely of nature—amid these forms and colours of richest beauty—there is a disinterment, a resurrection of sentiment; the pressure of our earthly part seems removed, and those *senses of the mind*, if I may so speak, which serve to connect our spirits with the invisible world around us, recover their proper tone, and perform their proper office."

"*Senses of the mind*," I said, repeating the phrase; "the idea is new to me; but I think I catch your meaning."

"Yes; there are—there must be such," he continued, with growing enthusiasm; "man is essentially a religious creature—a looker beyond the grave, from the very constitution of his mind; and the sceptic who denies it is untrue not merely to the Being who has made and who

preserves him, but to the entire scope and bent of his own nature besides. Wherever man is—whether he be a wanderer of the wild forest or still wilder desert, a dweller in some lone isle of the sea, or the tutored and full-minded denizen of some blessed land like our own—wherever man is, there is religion—hopes that look forward and upward—the belief in an unending existence, and a land of separate souls."

I was carried away by the enthusiasm of my companion, and felt, for the time, as if my mind had become the mirror of his. There seems to obtain among men a species of moral gravitation, analogous, in its principles, to that which regulates and controls the movements of the planetary system. The larger and more ponderous any body, the greater its attractive force, and the more overpowering its influence over the lesser bodies which surround it. The earth we inhabit carries the moon along with it in its course, and is itself subject to the immensely more powerful influence of the sun. And it is thus with character. It is a law of our nature, as certainly as of the system we inhabit, that the inferior should yield to the superior, and the lesser owe its guidance to the greater. I had hitherto wandered on through life almost unconscious of the existence of this law, or, if occasionally rendered half aware of it, it was only through a feeling that some secret influence was operating favourably in my behalf on the common minds around me. I now felt, however, for the first time, that I had come in contact with a mind immeasurably more powerful than my own; my thoughts seemed to cast themselves into the very mould—my sentiments to modulate themselves by the very tone of his. And yet he was but a russet-clad peasant—my junior by at least eight years—who was returning from school to assist his father, an humble tacksman, in the labours of the approaching harvest. But the law of circumstance, so

arbitrary in ruling the destinies of common men, exerts but a feeble control over the children of genius. The prophet went forth commissioned by Heaven to anoint a king over Israel, and the choice fell on a shepherd boy who was tending his father's flocks in the field.

We had reached a lovely bend of the stream. There was a semicircular inflection in the steep bank, which waved over us, from base to summit, with hawthorn and hazle; and while one half looked blue and dark in the shade, the other was lighted up with gorgeous and fiery splendour by the sun, now fast sinking in the west. The effect seemed magical. A little grassy platform that stretched between the hanging wood and the stream, was whitened over with clothes, that looked like snow-wreathes in the hollow; and a young and beautiful girl watched beside them.

"Mary Campbell!" exclaimed my companion, and in a moment he was at her side, and had grasped both her hands in his. "How fortunate, how very fortunate I am!" he said; "I could not have so much as hoped to have seen you to-night, and yet here you are! This, Mr. Lindsay, is a loved friend of mine, whom I have known and valued for years; ever, indeed, since we herded our sheep together under the cover of one plaid. Dearest Mary, I have had sad forebodings regarding you for the whole last month I was in Kirkoswald, and yet, after all my foolish fears, here you are, ruddier and bonnier than ever."

She was, in truth, a beautiful, sylph-like young woman —one whom I would have looked at with complacency in any circumstances; for who that admires the fair and the lovely in nature—whether it be the wide-spread beauty of sky and earth, or beauty in its minuter modifications, as we see it in the flowers that spring up at our feet, or the butterfly that flutters over them—who, I say, that

admires the fair and lovely in nature, can be indifferent to the fairest and loveliest of all her productions? As the mistress, however, of by far the strongest-minded man I ever knew, there was more of scrutiny in my glance than usual, and I felt a deeper interest in her than mere beauty could have awakened. She was, perhaps, rather below than above the middle size; but formed in such admirable proportion, that it seemed out of place to think of size in reference to her at all. Who, in looking at the *Venus de Medicis*, asks whether she be tall or short? The bust and neck were so exquisitely moulded, that they reminded me of Burke's fanciful remark, viz., that our ideas of beauty originate in our love of the sex, and that we deem every object beautiful which is described by soft-waving lines, resembling those of the female neck and bosom. Her feet and arms, which were both bare, had a statue-like symmetry and marble-like whiteness; but it was on her expressive and lovely countenance, now lighted up by the glow of joyous feeling, that nature seemed to have exhausted her utmost skill. There was a fascinating mixture in the expression of superior intelligence and child-like simplicity; a soft, modest light dwelt in the blue eye; and in the entire contour and general form of the features, there was a nearer approach to that union of the straight and the rounded, which is found in its perfection in only the Grecian face, than is at all common in our northern latitudes, among the descendants of either the Celt or the Saxon. I felt, however, as I gazed, that when lovers meet, the presence of a third person, however much the friend of either, must always be less than agreeable.

"Mr. Burns," I said, "there is a beautiful eminence a few hundred yards to the right, from which I am desirous to overlook the windings of the stream. Do permit me to leave you for a short half hour, when I shall return; or, lest I weary you by my stay, 'twere better, perhaps, you

should join me there." My companion greeted the proposal with a good-humoured smile of intelligence; and, plunging into the wood, I left him with his Mary. The sun had just set as he joined me.

"Have you ever been in love, Mr. Lindsay?" he said.

"No, never seriously," I replied. "I am, perhaps, not naturally of the coolest temperament imaginable; but the same fortune that has improved my mind in some little degree, and given me high notions of the sex, has hitherto thrown me among only its less superior specimens. I am now in my eight-and-twentieth year, and I have not yet met with a woman whom I could love."

"Then you are yet a stranger," he rejoined, "to the greatest happiness of which our nature is capable I have enjoyed more heartfelt pleasure in the company of the young woman I have just left, than from every other source that has been opened to me from my childhood till now. Love, my friend, is the fulfilling of the whole law."

"Mary Campbell, did you not call her?" I said. "She is, I think, the loveliest creature I have ever seen; and I am much mistaken in the expression of her beauty, if her mind be not as lovely as her person."

"It is, it is," he exclaimed—"the intelligence of an angel with the simplicity of a child. Oh, the delight of being thoroughly trusted, thoroughly beloved by one of the loveliest, best, purest-minded of all God's good creatures! To feel that heart beating against my own, and to know that it beats for me only! Never have I passed an evening with my Mary without returning to the world a better, gentler, wiser man. Love, my friend, is the fulfilling of the whole law. What are we without it?—poor, vile, selfish animals; our very virtues themselves, so exclusively virtues on our own behalf as to be well nigh as hateful as our vices. Nothing so opens and improves the

heart, nothing so widens the grasp of the affections, nothing half so effectually brings us out of our crust of self, as a happy, well-regulated love for a pure-minded, affectionate-hearted woman!"

"There is another kind of love, of which we sailors see somewhat," I said, "which is not so easily associated with good."

"Love!" he replied—"no, Mr. Lindsay, that is not the name. Kind associates with kind in all nature; and love—humanizing, heart-softening love—cannot be the companion of whatever is low, mean, worthless, degrading—the associate of ruthless dishonour, cunning, treachery, and violent death. Even independent of its amount of evil as a crime, or the evils still greater than itself which necessarily accompany it, there is nothing that so petrifies the feeling as illicit connection."

"Do you seriously think so?" I asked.

"Yes, and I see clearly how it should be so. Neither sex is complete of itself—each was made for the other, that, like the two halves of a hinge, they may become an entire whole when united. Only think of the scriptural phrase, *one flesh*—it is of itself a system of philosophy. Refinement and tenderness are of the woman, strength and dignity of the man. Only observe the effects of a thorough separation, whether originating in accident or caprice. You will find the stronger sex lost in the rudenesses of partial barbarism; the gentler wrapt up in some pitiful round of trivial and unmeaning occupation—dry-nursing puppies, or making pincushions for posterity. But how much more pitiful are the effects when they meet amiss—when the humanizing friend and companion of the man is converted into the light degraded toy of an idle hour; the object of a sordid appetite that lives but for a moment, and then expires in loathing and disgust! The better feelings are iced over at their source, chilled by the freez-

ing and deadening contact—where there is nothing to inspire confidence or solicit esteem; and, if these pass not through the first, the inner circle—that circle within which the social affections are formed, and from whence they emanate—how can they possibly flow through the circles which lie beyond? But here, Mr. Lindsay, is the farm of Lochlea, and yonder brown cottage, beside the three elms, is the dwelling of my parents."

CHAPTER IV.

> "From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,
> That makes her lov'd at home, revered abroad."
>
> *Cotter's Saturday Night.*

There was a wide and cheerful circle this evening round the hospitable hearth of Lochlea. The father of my friend, a patriarchal-looking old man, with a countenance the most expressive I have almost ever seen, sat beside the wall, on a large oaken settle, which also served to accommodate a young man, an occasional visitor of the family, dressed in rather shabby black, whom I at once set down as a probationer of divinity. I had my own seat beside him. The brother of my friend (a lad cast in nearly the same mould of form and feature, except, perhaps, that his frame, though muscular and strongly set, seemed in the main less formidably robust, and his countenance, though expressive, less decidedly intellectual) sat at my side. My friend had drawn in his seat beside his mother, a well-formed, comely brunette, of about thirty-eight, whom I might almost have mistaken for his elder sister; and two or three younger members of the family were grouped behind her. The fire blazed cheerily within the wide and

open chimney; and, throwing its strong light on the faces and limbs of the circle, sent our shadows flickering across the rafters and the wall behind. The conversation was animated and rational, and every one contributed his share. But I was chiefly interested in the remarks of the old man, for whom I already felt a growing veneration, and in those of his wonderfully-gifted son.

"Unquestionably, Mr. Burns," said the man in black, addressing the farmer, "politeness is but a very shadow, as the poet hath it, if the heart be wanting. I saw, to-night, in a strictly polite family, so marked a presumption of the lack of that natural affection of which politeness is but the portraiture and semblance, that truly I have been grieved in my heart ever since."

"Ah, Mr. Murdoch," said the farmer, "there is ever more hypocrisy in the world than in the church, and that, too, among the class of fine gentlemen and fine ladies who deny it most. But the instance"—

"You know the family, my worthy friend," continued Mr. Murdoch—"it is a very pretty one, as we say vernacularly, being numerous, and the sons highly genteel young men; the daughters not less so. A neighbour of the same very polite character, coming on a visit when I was among them, asked the father, in the course of a conversation to which I was privy, how he meant to dispose of his sons; when the father replied that he had not yet determined. The visitor said, that were he in his place, seeing they were all well-educated young men, he would send them abroad; to which the father objected the indubitable fact, that many young men lost their health in foreign countries, and very many their lives. 'True,' did the visitor rejoin; 'but, as you have a number of sons, it will be strange if some one of them does not live and make a fortune.' Now, Mr. Burns, what will you, who know the feelings of paternity, and the incalculable, and

assuredly I may say, invaluable value of human souls, think when I add, that the father commended the hint, as showing the wisdom of a shrewd man of the world!"

"Even the chief priests," said the old man, "pronounced it unlawful to cast into the treasury the thirty pieces of silver, seeing it was the price of blood; but the gentility of the present day is less scrupulous. There is a laxity of principle among us, Mr. Murdoch, that, if God restore us not, must end in the ruin of our country. I say laxity of principle; for there have ever been evil manners among us, and waifs in no inconsiderable number, broken loose from the decencies of society—more, perhaps, in my early days than there are now. But our principles at least were sound; and not only was there thus a restorative and conservative spirit among us, but, what was of not less importance, there was a broad gulf, like that in the parable, between the two grand classes, the good and the evil—a gulf which, when it secured the better class from contamination, interposed no barrier to the reformation and return of even the most vile and profligate, if repentant. But this gulf has disappeared, and we are standing unconcernedly over it, on a hollow and dangerous marsh of neutral ground, which, in the end, if God open not our eyes, must assuredly give way under our feet."

"To what, father," inquired my friend, who sat listening with the deepest and most respectful attention, "do you attribute the change?"

"Undoubtedly," replied the old man, "there have been many causes at work; and, though not impossible, it would certainly be no easy task to trace them all to their several effects, and give to each its due place and importance. But there is a deadly evil among us, though you will hear of it from neither press nor pulpit, which I am disposed to rank first in the number—the affectation of gentility. It has a threefold influence among us: it con-

founds the grand eternal distinctions of right and wrong, by erecting into a standard of conduct and opinion that heterogeneous and artificial whole which constitutes the manners and morals of the upper classes; it severs those ties of affection and good-will which should bind the middle to the lower orders, by disposing the one to regard whatever is below them with a true contemptuous indifference, and by provoking a bitter and indignant, though natural jealousy in the other for being so regarded; and, finally, by leading those who most entertain it into habits of expense, torturing their means, if I may so speak, on the rack of false opinion—disposing them to think, in their blindness, that to be genteel is a first consideration, and to be honest merely a secondary one—it has the effect of so hardening their hearts, that, like those Carthaginians of whom we have been lately reading in the volume Mr. Murdoch lent us, they offer up their very children, souls and bodies, to the unreal, phantom-like necessities of their circumstances."

"Have I not heard you remark, father," said Gilbert "that the change you describe has been very marked among the ministers of our church?"

"Too marked and too striking," replied the old man; "and in affecting the respectability and usefulness of so important a class, it has educed a cause of deterioration, distinctly from itself, and hardly less formidable. There is an old proverb of our country—'Better the head of the commonality than the tail of the gentry.' I have heard you quote it, Robert, oftener than once, and admire its homely wisdom. Now, it bears directly on what I have to remark—the ministers of our church have moved but one step during the last sixty years; but that step has been an all-important one—it has been from the best place in relation to the people, to the worst in relation to the aristocracy."

"Undoubtedly, worthy Mr. Burns," said Mr. Murdoch, "there is great truth, according to mine own experience, in that which you affirm. I may state, I trust, without over-boasting or conceit, my respected friend, that my learning is not inferior to that of our neighbour the clergyman—it is not inferior in Latin, nor in Greek, nor yet in French literature, Mr. Burns, and probable it is he would not much court a competition, and yet, when I last waited at the manse regarding a necessary and essential certificate, Mr. Burns, he did not so much as ask me to sit down."

"Ah!" said Gilbert, who seemed the wit of the family, "he is a highly respectable man, Mr. Murdoch—he has a fine house, fine furniture, fine carpets—all that constitutes respectability, you know; and his family is on visiting terms with that of the laird. But his credit is not so respectable, I hear."

"Gilbert," said the old man, with much seriousness, "it is ill with a people when they can speak lightly of their clergymen. There is still much of sterling worth and serious piety in the Church of Scotland; and if the influence of its ministers be unfortunately less than it was once, we must not cast the blame too exclusively on themselves. Other causes have been in operation. The church, eighty years ago, was the sole guide of opinion, and the only source of thought among us. There was, indeed, but one way in which a man could learn to think. His mind became the subject of some serious impression:—he applied to his Bible, and, in the contemplation of the most important of all concerns, his newly awakened faculties received their first exercise. All of intelligence, all of moral good in him, all that rendered him worthy of the name of man, he owed to the ennobling influence of his church; and is it wonder that that influence should be all-powerful from this circumstance alone? But a thorough change

has taken place;—new sources of intelligence have been opened up; we have our newspapers, and our magazines, and our volumes of miscellaneous reading; and it is now possible enough for the most cultivated mind in a parish to be the least moral and the least religious; and hence necessarily a diminished influence in the church, independent of the character of its ministers."

I have dwelt too long, perhaps, on the conversation of the elder Burns; but I feel much pleasure in thus developing, as it were, my recollections of one whom his powerful-minded son has described—and this after an acquaintance with our Henry Mackenzies, Adam Smiths, and Dugald Stewarts—as the man most thoroughly acquainted with the world he ever knew. Never, at least, have I met with any one who exerted a more wholesome influence, through the force of moral character, on those around him. We sat down to a plain and homely supper. The slave question had, about this time, begun to draw the attention of a few of the more excellent and intelligent among the people, and the elder Burns seemed deeply interested in it.

"This is but homely fare, Mr. Lindsay," he said, pointing to the simple viands before us, "and the apologists of slavery among us would tell you how inferior we are to the poor negroes, who fare so much better. But surely 'man liveth not by bread alone!' Our fathers who died for Christ on the hillside and the scaffold were noble men, and never, never shall slavery produce such, and yet they toiled as hard, and fared as meanly as we their children."

I could feel, in the cottage of such a peasant, and seated beside such men as his two sons, the full force of the remark. And yet I have heard the miserable sophism of unprincipled power against which it was directed—a sophism so insulting to the dignity of honest poverty—a thousand times repeated.

Supper over, the famliy circle widened round the

hearth; and the old man, taking down a large clasped Bible, seated himself beside the iron lamp which now lighted the apartment. There was deep silence among us as he turned over the leaves. Never shall I forget his appearance. He was tall and thin, and though his frame was still vigorous, considerably bent. His features were high and massy—the complexion still retained much of the freshness of youth, and the eye all its intelligence; but the locks were waxing thin and grey round his high, thoughtful forehead, and the upper part of the head, which was elevated to an unusual height, was bald. There was an expression of the deepest seriousness on the countenance, which the strong umbery shadows of the apartment served to heighten; and when, laying his hand on the page, he half turned his face to the circle, and said, "*Let us worship God*," I was impressed by a feeling of awe and reverence to which I had, alas! been a stranger for years. I was affected too, almost to tears, as I joined in the psalm; for a thousand half-forgotten associations came rushing upon me; and my heart seemed to swell and expand as, kneeling beside him when he prayed, I listened to his solemn and fervent petition, that God might make manifest his great power and goodness in the salvation of man. Nor was the poor solitary wanderer of the deep forgotten.

On rising from our devotions, the old man grasped me by the hand. "I am happy," he said, "that we should have met, Mr. Lindsay. I feel an interest in you, and must take the friend and the old man's privilege of giving you an advice. The sailor, of all men, stands most in need of religion. His life is one of continued vicissitude—of unexpected success, or unlooked-for misfortune; he is ever passing from danger to safety, and from safety to danger; his dependence is on the ever-varying winds, his abode on the unstable waters. And the mind takes a peculiar tone from what is peculiar in the circumstances.

With nothing stable in the real world around it on which it may rest, it forms a resting-place for itself in some wild code of belief. It peoples the elements with strange occult powers of good and evil, and does them homage—addressing its prayers to the genius of the winds, and the spirits of the waters. And thus it begets a religion for itself;—for what else is the professional superstition of the sailor? Substitute, my friend, for this—(shall I call it unavoidable superstition?)—this natural religion of the sea, the religion of the Bible. Since you must be a believer in the supernatural, let your belief be true; let your trust be on Him who faileth not—your anchor within the vail; and all shall be well, be your destiny for this world what it may."

We parted for the night, and I saw him no more.

Next morning, Robert accompainied me for several miles on my way. I saw, for the last half hour, that he had something to communicate, and yet knew not how to set about it; and so I made a full stop.

"You have something to tell me, Mr. Burns," I said: "need I assure you I am one you are in no danger from trusting." He blushed deeply, and I saw him, for the first time, hesitate and falter in his address.

"Forgive me," he at length said—"believe me, Mr. Lindsay, I would be the last in the world to hurt the feelings of a friend—a—a—but you have been left among us penniless, and I have a very little money which I have no use for—none in the least;—will you not favour me by accepting it as a loan?"

I felt the full and generous delicacy of the proposal, and, with moistened eyes and a swelling heart, availed myself of his kindness. The sum he tendered did not much exceed a guinea; but the yearly earnings of the peasant Burns fell, at this period of his life, rather below eight pounds.

CHAPTER V.

"Corbies an' clergy are a shot right kittle."—*Brigs of Ayr.*

The years passed, and I was again a dweller on the sea; but the ill-fortune which had hitherto tracked me like a bloodhound, seemed at length as if tired in the pursuit, and I was now the master of a West India trader, and had begun to lay the foundation of that competency which has secured to my declining years the quiet and comfort which, for the latter part of my life, it has been my happiness to enjoy. My vessel had arrived at Liverpool in the latter part of the year 1784, and I had taken coach for Irvine, to visit my mother, whom I had not seen for several years. There was a change of passengers at every stage; but I saw little in any of them to interest me, till within about a score of miles of my destination, when I met with an old respectable townsman, a friend of my father's. There was but another passenger in the coach, a north country gentleman from the West Indies. I had many questions to ask my townsman, and many to answer—and the time passed lightly away.

"Can you tell me aught of the Burnses of Lochlea?" I inquired, after learning that my mother and other relatives were well. "I met with the young man Robert about five years ago, and have often since asked myself what special end providence could have in view in making such a man."

"I was acquainted with old William Burns," said my companion, "when he was gardener at Denholm, an' got intimate wi' his son Robert when he lived wi' us at Irvine, a twalmonth syne. The faither died shortly ago, sairly straitened in his means, I'm feared, and no very square wi' the laird—an' ill wad he hae liked that, for an

honester man never breathed. Robert, puir chield, is no very easy either."

"In his circumstances?" I said.

"Ay, an' waur:—he got entangled wi' the kirk on an unlucky sculduddery business, an' has been writing bitter, wicked ballads on a' the guid ministers in the country ever syne. I'm vexed it's on them he suld hae fallen; an' yet they hae been to blame too."

"Robert Burns so entangled, so occupied!" I exclaimed; "you grieve and astonish me."

"We are puir creatures, Matthew," said the old man; "strength an' weakness are often next door neighbours in the best o' us; nay, what is our vera strength taen on the ae side, may be our vera weakness taen on the ither. Never was there a stancher, firmer fallow than Robert Burns; an' now that he has taen a wrang step, puir chield, that vera stanchness seems just a weak want o' ability to yield. He has planted his foot where it lighted by mishanter, and a' the guid an' ill in Scotland wadna budge him frae the spot."

"Dear me! that so powerful a mind should be so frivolously engaged! Making ballads, you say?—with what success?"

"Ah, Matthew lad, when the strong man puts out his strength," said my companion, "there's naething frivolous in the matter, be his object what it may. Robert's ballads are far, far aboon the best things ever seen in Scotland afore; we auld folk dinna ken whether maist to blame or praise them, but they keep the young people laughing frae the ae nuik o' the shire till the ither."

"But how," I inquired, "have the better clergy rendered themselves obnoxious to Burns? The laws he has violated, if I rightly understand you, are indeed severe, and somewhat questionable in their tendencies; and even good men often press them too far."

"And in the case of Robert," said the old man, "our clergy have been strict to the very letter. They're guid men an' faithfu' ministers; but ane o' them, at least, an' he a leader, has a harsh, ill temper, an' mistakes sometimes the corruption o' the auld man in him for the proper zeal o' the new ane. Nor is there ony o' the ithers wha kent what they had to deal wi' when Robert cam afore them. They saw but a proud, thrawart ploughman, that stood uncow'ring under the glunsh o' a hail session; and so they opened on him the artillery o' the kirk, to bear down his pride. Wha could hae told them that they were but frushing their straw an' rotten wood against the iron scales o' Leviathan? An' now that they hae dune their maist, the record o' Robert's mishanter is lying in whity-brown ink yonder in a page o' the session-buik, while the ballads hae sunk deep deep intil the very mind o' the country, and may live there for hunders and hunders o' years."

"You seem to contrast, in this business," I said, "our better with what you must deem our inferior clergy. You mean, do you not, the higher and lower parties in our church? How are they getting on now?"

"Never worse," replied the old man; "an', oh, it's surely ill when the ministers o' peace become the very leaders o' contention! But let the blame rest in the right place. Peace is surely a blessing frae Heaven—no a guid wark demanded frae man; an' when it grows our duty to be in war, it's an ill thing to be in peace. Our Evangelicals are stan'in', puir folk, whar their faithers stood; an' if they maun either fight or be beaten frae their post, why, it's just their duty to fight. But the Moderates are rinnin' mad a'thegither amang us: signing our auld Confession, just that they may get intil the kirk to preach against it; paring the New Testament doun to the vera standard o' heathen Plawto; and sinking ae doctrine after anither, till they leave ahint naething but deism that might scunner

an infidel. Deed, Matthew, if there comena a change among them, an' that sune, they'll swamp the puir kirk a' thegither. The cauld morality that never made ony ane mair moral, taks nae haud o' the people; an' patronage, as meikle's they roose it, winna keep up either kirk or manse o' itsel. Sorry I am, sin' Robert has entered on the quarrel at a', it suld hae been on the wrang side."

"One of my chief objections," I said, "to the religion of the Moderate party is, that it is of no use."

"A gey serious ane," rejoined the old man; "but maybe there's a waur still. I'm unco vexed for Robert, baith on his worthy faither's account and his ain. He's a fearsome fellow when ance angered, but an honest, warm-hearted chield for a' that; an' there's mair sense in yon big head o' his, than in ony ither twa in the country."

"Can you tell me aught," said the north country gentleman, addressing my companion, "of Mr. R——, the chapel minister in K———? I was once one of his pupils in the far north; but I have heard nothing of him since he left Cromarty."

"Why," rejoined the old man, "he's just the man that, mair nor a' the rest, has borne the brunt o' Robert's fearsome waggery. Did ye ken him in Cromarty, say ye?"

"He was parish schoolmaster there," said the gentleman, "for twelve years; and for six of these I attended his school. I cannot help respecting him; but no one ever loved him. Never surely was there a man at once so unequivocally honest and so thoroughly unamiable."

"You must have found him a rigid disciplinarian," I said.

"He was the most so," he replied, "from the days of Dionysius, at least, that ever taught a school. I remember there was a poor fisher boy among us named Skinner, who, as is customary in Scottish schools, as you must know, blew the horn for gathering the scholars, and kept the

catalogue and the key; and who, in return, was educated by the master, and received some little gratuity from the scholars besides. On one occasion, the key dropped out of his pocket; and, when school-time came, the irascible dominie had to burst open the door with his foot. He raged at the boy with a fury so insane, and beat him so unmercifully, that the other boys, gathering heart in the extremity of the case, had to rise *en masse* and tear him out of his hands. But the curious part of the story is yet to come: Skinner has been a fisherman for the last twelve years; but never has he been seen disengaged, for a moment, from that time to this, without mechanically thrusting his hand into the key pocket."

Our companion furnished us with two or three other anecdotes of Mr. R——. He told us of a lady who was so overcome by sudden terror on unexpectedly seeing him, many years after she had quitted his school, in one of the pulpits of the south, that she fainted away; and of another of his scholars, named M'Glashan, a robust, daring fellow of six feet, who, when returning to Cromarty from some of the colonies, solaced himself by the way with thoughts of the hearty drubbing with which he was to clear off all his old scores with the dominie."

"Ere his return, however," continued the gentleman, "Mr. R—— had quitted the parish; and, had it chanced otherwise, it is questionable whether M'Glashan, with all his strength and courage, would have gained anything in an encounter with one of the boldest and most powerful men in the country."

Such were some of the chance glimpses which I gained, at this time, of by far the most powerful of the opponents of Burns. He was a good, conscientious man; but unfortunate in a harsh, violent temper, and in sometimes mistaking, as my old townsman remarked, the dictates of that temper for those of duty.

CHAPTER VI.

"It's hardly in a body's pow'r
To keep at times frae being sour,
To see how things are shar'd—
How best o' chiels are whiles in want,
While coofs on countless thousands rant,
And kenna how to wair't."—*Epistle to Davie.*

I visited my friend, a few days after my arrival in Irvine, at the farm-house of Mossgiel, to which, on the death of his father, he had removed, with his brother Gilbert and his mother. I could not help observing that his manners were considerably changed: my welcome seemed less kind and hearty than I could have anticipated from the warm-hearted peasant of five years ago, and there was a stern and almost supercilious elevation in his bearing, which at first pained and offended me. I had met with him as he was returning from the fields after the labours of the day; the dusk of twilight had fallen; and, though I had calculated on passing the evening with him at the farm-house of Mossgiel, so displeased was I, that, after our first greeting, I had more than half changed my mind. The recollection of his former kindness to me, however, suspended the feeling, and I resolved on throwing myself on his hospitality for the night, however cold the welcome.

"I have come all the way from Irvine to see you, Mr. Burns," I said. "For the last five years, I have thought more of my mother and you than of any other two persons in the country. May I not calculate, as of old, on my supper and a bed?"

There was an instantaneous change in his expression.

"Pardon me, my friend," he said, grasping my hand; "I have, unwittingly, been doing you wrong; one may

surely be the master of an Indiaman and in possession of a heart too honest to be spoiled by prosperity!"

The remark served to explain the haughty coldness of his manner which had so displeased me, and which was but the unwillingly assumed armour of a defensive pride.

"There, brother," he said, throwing down some plough irons which he carried, "send *wee Davoc* with these to the smithy, and bid him tell Rankin I won't be there to-night. The moon is rising, Mr. Lindsay—shall we not have a stroll together through the coppice?"

"That of all things," I replied; and, parting from Gilbert, we struck into the wood.

The evening, considering the lateness of the season, for winter had set in, was mild and pleasant. The moon at full was rising over the Cumnock hills, and casting its faint light on the trees that rose around us, in their winding-sheets of brown and yellow, like so many spectres, or that, in the more exposed glares and openings of the wood, stretched their long naked arms to the sky. A light breeze went rustling through the withered grass; and I could see the faint twinkling of the falling leaves, as they came showering down on every side of us.

"We meet in the midst of death and desolation," said my companion—"we parted when all around us was fresh and beautiful. My father was with me then, and—and Mary Campbell—and now"——

"Mary! your Mary!" I exclaimed—"the young—the beautiful—alas! is she also gone?"

"She has left me," he said—"left me. Mary is in her grave!"

I felt my heart swell, as the image of that loveliest of creatures came rising to my view in all her beauty, as I had seen her by the river side; and I knew not what to reply.

"Yes," continued my friend, "she's in her grave;—we

parted for a few days, to re-unite, as we hoped, for ever; and, ere these few days had passed, she was in her grave. But I was unworthy of her—unworthy even then; and now——But she is in her grave!"

I grasped his hand. "It is difficult," I said, "to *bid* the heart submit to these dispensations, and, oh, how utterly impossible to bring it to *listen!* But life—*your* life, my friend—must not be passed in useless sorrow. I am convinced, and often have I thought of it since our last meeting, that yours is no vulgar destiny—though I know not to what it tends."

"Downwards!" he exclaimed—"it tends downwards;—I see, I feel it;—the anchor of my affection is gone, and I drift shoreward on the rocks."

"'Twere ruin," I exclaimed, "to think so!"

"Not half an hour ere my father died," he continued, "he expressed a wish to rise and sit once more in his chair; and we indulged him. But, alas! the same feeling of uneasiness which had prompted the wish, remained with him still, and he sought to return again to his bed. 'It is not by quitting the bed or the chair,' he said, 'that I need seek for ease: it is by quitting the body.' I am oppressed, Mr. Lindsay, by a somewhat similar feeling of uneasiness, and, at times, would fain cast the blame on the circumstances in which I am placed. But I may be as far mistaken as my poor father. I would fain live at peace with all mankind—nay, more, I would fain love and do good to them all; but the villain and the oppressor come to set their feet on my very neck, and crush me into the mire—and must I not resist? And when, in some luckless hour, I yield to my passions—to those fearful passions that must one day overwhelm me—when I yield, and my whole mind is darkened by remorse, and I groan under the discipline of conscience, then comes the odious, abominable hypocrite—the devourer of widows' houses and the

substance of the orphan—and demands that my repentance be as public as his own hollow, detestable prayers. And can I do other than resist and expose him? My heart tells me it was formed to bestow—why else does every misery that I cannot relieve render me wretched? It tells me, too, it was formed not to receive—why else does the proffered assistance of even a friend fill my whole soul with indignation? But ill do my circumstances agree with my feelings. I feel as if I were totally misplaced in some frolic of nature, and wander onwards in gloom and unhappiness, seeking for my proper sphere. But, alas! these efforts of uneasy misery are but the blind gropings of Homer's Cyclops round the walls of his cave."

I again began to experience, as on a former occasion, the o'ermastering power of a mind larger beyond comparison than my own; but I felt it my duty to resist the influence. "Yes, you are misplaced, my friend," I said—"perhaps more decidedly so than any other man I ever knew; but is not this characteristic, in some measure, of the whole species? We are all misplaced; and it seems a part of the scheme of deity, that we should work ourselves up to our proper sphere. In what other respect does man so differ from the inferior animals as in those aspirations which lead him through all the progressions of improvement, from the lowest to the highest level of his nature?"

"That may be philosophy, my friend," he replied, "but a heart ill at ease finds little of comfort in it. You knew my father: need I say he was one of the excellent of the earth—a man who held directly from God Almighty the patent of his honours? I saw that father sink broken-hearted into the grave, the victim of legalized oppression—yes, saw him overborne in the long contest which his high spirit and his indomitable love of the right had

incited him to maintain—overborne by a mean, despicable scoundrel, one of the creeping things of the earth. Heaven knows I did my utmost to assist in the struggle. In my fifteenth year, Mr. Lindsay, when a thin, loose-jointed boy, I did the work of a man, and strained my unknit and overtoiled sinews as if life and death depended on the issue, till oft, in the middle of the night, I have had to fling myself from my bed to avoid instant suffocation—an effect of exertion so prolonged and so premature. Nor has the man exerted himself less heartily than the boy—in the roughest, severest labours of the field, I have never yet met a competitor. But my labours have been all in vain —I have seen the evil bewailed by Solomon—the righteous man falling down before the wicked." I could answer only with a sigh. "You are in the right," he continued, after a pause, and in a more subdued tone: "man is certainly misplaced—the present scene of things is below the dignity of both his moral and intellectual nature. Look round you—(we had reached the summit of a grassy eminence which rose over the wood, and commanded a pretty extensive view of the surrounding country)—see yonder scattered cottages, that, in the faint light, rise dim and black amid the stubble fields—my heart warms as I look on them, for I know how much of honest worth, and sound, generous feeling shelters under these rooftrees. But why so much of moral excellence united to a mere machinery for ministering to the ease and luxury of a few of, perhaps, the least worthy of our species—creatures so spoiled by prosperity that the claim of a common nature has no force to move them, and who seem as miserably misplaced as the myriads whom they oppress?"

"If I'm designed yon lordling's slave—
By nature's law designed—
Why was an independent wish
E'er planted in my mind?

If not, why am I subject to
His cruelty and scorn?
Or why has man the will and power
To make his fellow mourn?"

"I would hardly know what to say in return, my friend," I rejoined, "did not you, yourself, furnish me with the reply. You are groping on in darkness, and it may be unhappiness, for your proper sphere; but it is in obedience to a great though occult law of our nature—a law, general as it affects the species, in its course of onward progression—particular, and infinitely more irresistible, as it operates on every truly superior intellect. There are men born to wield the destinies of nations—nay, more, to stamp the impression of their thoughts and feelings on the mind of the whole civilized world. And by what means do we often find them roused to accomplish their appointed work? At times hounded on by sorrow and suffering, and thus in the design of providence, that there may be less of sorrow and suffering in the world ever after—at times roused by cruel and maddening oppression, that the oppressor may perish in his guilt, and a whole country enjoy the blessings of freedom. If Wallace had not suffered from tyranny, Scotland would not have been free."

"But how apply the remark?" said my companion.

"Robert Burns," I replied, again grasping his hand, "yours, I am convinced, is no vulgar destiny. Your griefs, your sufferings, your errors even, the oppressions you have seen and felt, the thoughts which have arisen in your mind, the feelings and sentiments of which it has been the subject, are, I am convinced, of infinitely more importance in their relation to your country than to yourself. You are, wisely and benevolently, placed far below your level, that thousands and ten thousands of your countrymen may be the better enabled to attain to theirs. Assert the dignity of manhood and of genius, and

there will be less of wrong and oppression in the world ever after."

I spent the remainder of the evening in the farm-house of Mossgiel, and took the coach next morning for Liverpool.

CHAPTER VII.

"His is that language of the heart
In which the answering heart would speak—
Thought, word, that bids the warm tear start,
Or the smile light up the check;
And his that music to whose tone
The common pulse of man keeps time,
In cot or castle's mirth or moan,
In cold or sunny clime."—*American poet.*

The love of literature, when once thoroughly awakened in a reflective mind, can never after cease to influence it. It first assimilates our intellectual part to those fine intellects which live in the world of books, and then renders our connection with them indispensable, by laying hold of that social principle of our nature which ever leads us to the society of our fellows as our proper sphere of enjoyment. My early habits, by heightening my tone of thought and feeling, had tended considerably to narrow my circle of companionship. My profession, too, had led me to be much alone; and now that I had been several years the master of an Indiaman, I was quite as fond of reading, and felt as deep an interest in whatever took place in the literary world, as when a student at St. Andrew's. There was much in the literature of the period to gratify my pride as a Scotchman. The despotism, both political and religious, which had overlaid the energies of our country for more than a century, had long been removed, and the national mind had swelled and expanded under a better

system of things, till its influence had become co-extensive with civilized man. Hume had produced his inimitable history, and Adam Smith his wonderful work, which was to revolutionize and new-model the economy of all the governments of the earth. And there, in my little library, were the histories of Henry and Robertson, the philosophy of Kaimes and Reid, the novels of Smollett and Mackenzie, and the poetry of Beattie and Home. But, if there was no lack of Scottish intellect in the literature of the time, there was a decided lack of Scottish manners; and I knew too much of my humble countrymen not to regret it. True, I had before me the writings of Ramsay and my unfortunate friend Ferguson; but there was a radical meanness in the first that lowered the tone of his colouring far beneath the freshness of truth, and the second, whom I had seen perish—too soon, alas! for literature and his country—had given us but a few specimens of his power when his hand was arrested for ever.

My vessel, after a profitable, though somewhat tedious voyage, had again arrived in Liverpool. It was late in December, 1786, and I was passing the long evening in my cabin, engaged with a whole sheaf of pamphlets and magazines which had been sent me from the shore. *The Lounger* was, at this time, in course of publication. I had ever been an admirer of the quiet elegance and exquisite tenderness of Mackenzie; and, though I might not be quite disposed to think, with Johnson, that "the chief glory of every people arises from its authors," I certainly felt all the prouder of my country, from the circumstance that so accomplished a writer was one of my countrymen. I had read this evening some of the more recent numbers, half disposed to regret, however, amid all the pleasure they afforded me, that the Addison of Scotland had not done for the manners of his country what his illustrious prototype had done for those of England, when my eye fell

on the ninety-seventh number. I read the introductory sentences, and admired their truth and elegance. I had felt, in the contemplation of supereminent genius, the pleasure which the writer describes, and my thoughts reverted to my two friends—the dead and the living. "In the view of highly superior talents, as in that of great and stupendous objects," says the essayist, "there is a sublimity which fills the soul with wonder and delight—which expands it, as it were, beyond its usual bounds, and which, investing our nature with extraordinary powers and extraordinary honours, interests our curiosity and flatters our pride."

I read on with increasing interest. It was evident, from the tone of the introduction, that some new luminary had arisen in the literary horizon, and I felt somewhat like a schoolboy when, at his first play, he waits for the drawing up of the curtain. And the curtain at length rose. "The person," continues the essayist, "to whom I allude"—and he alludes to him as a genius of no ordinary class—"is Robert Burns, an Ayrshire ploughman." The effect on my nerves seemed electrical; I clapped my hands, and sprung from my seat: "Was I not certain of it! Did I not foresee it!" I exclaimed. "My noble-minded friend, Robert Burns!" I ran hastily over the warm-hearted and generous critique, so unlike the cold, timid, equivocal notices with which the professional critic has greeted, on their first appearance, so many works destined to immortality. It was Mackenzie, the discriminating, the classical, the elegant, who assured me that the productions of this "heaven-taught ploughman were fraught with the high-toned feeling and the power and energy of expression characteristic of the mind and voice of the poet"—with the solemn, the tender, the sublime; that they contained images of pastoral beauty which no other writer had ever surpassed, and strains of wild humour which only the

higher masters of the lyre had ever equalled; and that the genius displayed in them seemed not less admirable in tracing the manners than in painting the passions, or in drawing the scenery of nature. I flung down the essay, ascended to the deck in three huge strides, leaped ashore, and reached my bookseller's as he was shutting up for the night.

"Can you furnish me with a copy of Burns' Poems," I said, "either for love or money?"

"I have but one copy left," replied the man, "and here it is."

I flung down a guinea. "The change," I said, "I shall get when I am less in a hurry."

'Twas late that evening ere I remembered that 'tis customary to spend at least part of the night in bed. I read on and on with a still increasing astonishment and delight, laughing and crying by turns. I was quite in a new world; all was fresh and unsoiled—the thoughts, the descriptions, the images—as if the volume I read was the first that had ever been written; and yet all was easy and natural, and appealed, with a truth and force irresistible, to the recollections I cherished most fondly. Nature and Scotland met me at every turn. I had admired the polished compositions of Pope, and Gray, and Collins, though I could not sometimes help feeling that, with all the exquisite art they displayed, there was a little additional art wanting still. In most cases the scaffolding seemed incorporated with the structure which it had served to rear; and, though certainly no scaffolding could be raised on surer principles, I could have wished that the ingenuity which had been tasked to erect it, had been exerted a little further in taking it down. But the work before me was evidently the production of a greater artist; not a fragment of the scaffolding remained—not so much as a mark to show how it had been constructed. The whole seemed to have

risen like an exhalation, and, in this respect, reminded me of the structures of Shakspeare alone. I read the inimitable "Twa Dogs." Here, I said, is the full and perfect realization of what Swift and Dryden were hardy enough to attempt, but lacked genius to accomplish. Here are dogs—*bona fide* dogs—endowed indeed with more than human sense and observation, but true to character, as the most honest and attached of quadrupeds, in every line. And then those exquisite touches which the poor man, inured to a life of toil and poverty, can alone rightly understand! and those deeply-based remarks on character, which only the philosopher can justly appreciate! This is the true catholic poetry, which addresses itself not to any little circle, walled in from the rest of the species by some peculiarity of thought, prejudice, or condition, but to the whole human family. I read on:—"The Holy Fair," "Hallow E'en," "The Vision," the "Address to the Deil," engaged me by turns; and then the strange, uproarious, unequalled "Death and Dr. Hornbook." This, I said, is something new in the literature of the world. Shakspeare possessed above all men the power of instant and yet natural transition, from the lightly gay to the deeply pathetic—from the wild to the humorous; but the opposite states of feeling which he induces, however close the neighbourhood, are ever distinct and separate; the oil and the water, though contained in the same vessel, remain apart. Here, however, for the first time, they mix and incorporate, and yet each retains its whole nature and full effect. I need hardly remind the reader that the feat has been repeated, and even with more completeness, in the wonderful "Tam o' Shanter." I read on. "The Cotter's Saturday Night" filled my whole soul—my heart throbbed and my eyes moistened; and never before did I feel half so proud of my country, or know half so well on what score it was I did best in feeling proud. I had

perused the entire volume from beginning to end, ere I remembered I had not taken supper, and that it was more than time to go to bed.

But it is no part of my plan to furnish a critique on the poems of my friend. I merely strive to recall the thoughts and feelings which my first perusal of them awakened, and thus only as a piece of mental history. Several months elapsed from this evening ere I could hold them out from me sufficiently at arms' length, as it were, to judge of their more striking characteristics. At times the amazing amount of thought, feeling, and imagery which they contained—their wonderful continuity of idea, without gap or interstice—seemed to me most to distinguish them. At times they reminded me, compared with the writings of smoother poets, of a collection of medals which, unlike the thin polished coin of the kingdom, retained all the significant and pictorial roughness of the original die. But when, after the lapse of weeks, months, years, I found them rising up in my heart on every occasion, as naturally as if they had been the original language of all my feelings and emotions—when I felt that, instead of remaining outside my mind, as it were, like the writings of other poets, they had so amalgamated themselves with my passions, my sentiments, my ideas, that they seemed to have become portions of my very self—I was led to a final conclusion regarding them. Their grand distinguishing characteristic is their unswerving and perfect truth. The poetry of Shakspeare is the mirror of life—that of Burns the expressive and richly modulated voice of human nature.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Burns was a poor man from his birth, and an exciseman from necessity; but—I *will say* it!—the sterling of his honest worth, poverty could not debase; and his independent British spirit oppression might bend, but could not subdue."—*Letter to Mr. Graham.*

I have been listening for the last half hour to the wild music of an Eolian harp. How exquisitely the tones rise and fall!—now sad, now solemn—now near, now distant. The nerves thrill, the heart softens, the imagination awakes as we listen. What if that delightful instrument be animated by a living soul, and these finely-modulated tones be but the expression of its feelings! What if these dying, melancholy cadences, which so melt and sink into the heart, be—what we may so naturally interpret them—the melodious sinkings of a deep-seated and hopeless unhappiness! Nay, the fancy is too wild for even a dream. But are there none of those fine analogies, which run through the whole of nature and the whole of art, to sublime it into truth? Yes, *there have* been such living harps among us; beings, the tones of whose sentiments, the melody of whose emotions, the cadences of whose sorrows, remain to thrill, and delight, and humanize our souls. They seem born for others, not for themselves. Alas, for the hapless companion of my early youth! Alas, for him, the pride of his country, the friend of my maturer manhood!—But my narrative lags in its progress.

My vessel lay in the Clyde for several weeks during the summer of 1794, and I found time to indulge myself in a brief tour along the western coasts of the kingdom, from Glasgow to the Borders. I entered Dumfries in a calm, lovely evening, and passed along one of the principal streets. The shadows of the houses on the western side were stretched half-way across the pavement, while, on the side

opposite, the bright sunshine seemed sleeping on the jutting irregular fronts, and high antique gables. There seemed a world of well-dressed company this evening in town; and I learned, on inquiry, that all the aristocracy of the adjacent country, for twenty miles round, had come in to attend a county ball. They went fluttering along the sunny side of the street, gay as butterflies—group succeeding group. On the opposite side, in the shade, a solitary individual was passing slowly along the pavement. I knew him at a glance. It was the first poet, perhaps the greatest man, of his age and country. But why so solitary? It had been told me that he ranked among his friends and associates many of the highest names in the kingdom, and yet to-night not one of the hundreds who fluttered past appeared inclined to recognise him. He seemed too—but perhaps fancy misled me—as if care-worn and dejected; pained, perhaps, that not one among so many of the *great* should have humility enough to notice a poor exciseman. I stole up to him unobserved, and tapped him on the shoulder; there was a decided fierceness in his manner as he turned abruptly round, but, as he recognised me, his expressive countenance lighted up in a moment, and I shall never forget the heartiness with which he grasped my hand.

We quitted the streets together for the neighbouring fields, and, after the natural interchange of mutual congratulations—"How is it," I inquired, "that you do not seem to have a single acquaintance among all the gay and great of the country?"

"I lie under quarantine," he replied; "tainted by the plague of liberalism. There is not one of the hundreds we passed to-night whom I could not once reckon among my intimates."

The intelligence stunned and irritated me. "How infinitely absurd!" I said. "Do they dream of sinking you into a common man?"

"Even so," he rejoined. "Do they not all know I have been a gauger for the last five years!"

The fact had both grieved and incensed me long before. I knew, too, that Pye enjoyed his salary as poet laureate of the time, and Dibdin, the song writer, his pension of two hundred a-year, and I blushed for my country.

"Yes," he continued—the ill-assumed coolness of his manner giving way before his highly excited feelings—"they have assigned me my place among the mean and the degraded, as their best patronage; and only yesterday, after an official threat of instant dismission, I was told it was my business to act, not to think. God help me! what have I done to provoke such bitter insult? I have ever discharged my miserable duty—discharged it, Mr. Lindsay, however repugnant to my feelings, as an honest man; and though there awaited me no promotion, I was silent. The wives or sisters of those whom they advanced over me had bastards to some of the —— family, and so their influence was necessarily greater than mine. But now they crush me into the very dust. I take an interest in the struggles of the slave for his freedom; I express my opinions as if I myself were a free man; and they threaten to starve me and my children if I dare so much as speak or think."

I expressed my indignant sympathy in a few broken sentences; and he went on with kindling animation:—

"Yes, they would fain crush me into the very dust! They cannot forgive me, that, being born a man, I should walk erect according to my nature. Mean-spirited and despicable themselves, they can tolerate only the mean-spirited and the despicable; and were I not so entirely in their power, Mr. Lindsay, I could regard them with the proper contempt. But the wretches can starve me and my children—and they *know* it; nor does it mend the matter that I *know* in turn, what pitiful, miserable, little creatures they are. What care I for the butterflies of to-night?—

they passed me without the honour of their notice; and I, in turn, suffered them to pass without the honour of mine; and I am more than quits. Do I not know that they and I are going on to the fulfilment of our several destinies?—they to sleep, in the obscurity of their native insignificance, with the pismires and grasshoppers of all the past, and I to be whatever the millions of my unborn countrymen shall yet decide. Pitiful little insects of an hour! what is their notice to me! But I bear a heart, Mr. Lindsay, that can feel the pain of treatment so unworthy; and I must confess it moves me. One cannot always live upon the future, divorced from the sympathies of the present. One cannot always solace one's self under the grinding despotism that would fetter one's very thoughts, with the conviction, however assured, that posterity will do justice both to the oppressor and the oppressed. I am sick at heart; and were it not for the poor little things that depend so entirely on my exertions, I could as cheerfully lay me down in the grave as I ever did in bed after the fatigues of a long day's labour. Heaven help me! I am miserably unfitted to struggle with even the natural evils of existence—how much more so when these are multiplied and exaggerated by the proud, capricious inhumanity of man!"

"There is a miserable lack of right principle and right feeling," I said, "among our upper classes in the present day; but, alas for poor human nature! it has ever been so, and, I am afraid, ever will. And there is quite as much of it in savage as in civilized life. I have seen the exclusive aristocratic spirit, with its one-sided injustice, as rampant in a wild isle of the Pacific as I ever saw it among ourselves."

"'Tis slight comfort," said my friend, with a melancholy smile, "to be assured, when one's heart bleeds from the cruelty or injustice of our fellows, that man is naturally cruel and unjust, and not less so as a savage than when better taught. I knew you, Mr. Lindsay, when you were

younger and less fortunate; but you have now reached that middle term of life when man naturally takes up the Tory and lays down the Whig; nor has there been aught in your improving circumstances to retard the change; and so you rest in the conclusion that, if the weak among us suffer from the tyranny of the strong, 'tis because human nature is so constituted, and the case therefore cannot be helped."

"Pardon me, Mr. Burns," I said, "I am not quite so finished a Tory as that amounts to."

"I am not one of those fanciful declaimers," he continued, "who set out on the assumption that man is free-born. I am too well assured of the contrary. Man is not free-born. The earlier period of his existence, whether as a puny child or the miserable denizen of an uninformed and barbarous state, is one of vassalage and subserviency. He is not born free, he is not born rational, he is not born virtuous; he is born to *become* all these. And woe to the sophist who, with arguments drawn from the unconfirmed constitution of his childhood, would strive to render his imperfect, because immature, state of pupilage a permanent one! We are yet far below the level of which our nature is capable, and possess in consequence but a small portion of the liberty which it is the destiny of our species to enjoy. And 'tis time our masters should be taught so. You will deem me a wild Jacobin, Mr. Lindsay; but persecution has the effect of making a man extreme in these matters. Do help me to curse the scoundrels!—my business to act, not to think!"

We were silent for several minutes.

"I have not yet thanked you, Mr. Burns," I at length said, "for the most exquisite pleasure I ever enjoyed. You have been my companion for the last eight years."

His countenance brightened.

"Ah, here I am boring you with my miseries and my

ill-nature," he replied; "but you must come along with me and see the bairns and Jean; and some of the best songs I ever wrote. It will go hard if we hold not care at the staff's end for at least one evening. You have not yet seen my stone punch-bowl, nor my Tam o'Shanter, nor a hundred other fine things beside. And yet, vile wretch that I am, I am sometimes so unconscionable as to be unhappy with them all. But come along."

We spent this evening together with as much of happiness as it has ever been my lot to enjoy. Never was there a fonder father than Burns, a more attached husband, or a warmer friend. There was an exuberance of love in his large heart, that encircled in its flow, relatives, friends, associates, his country, the world; and, in his kinder moods, the sympathetic influence which he exerted over the hearts of others seemed magical. I laughed and cried this evening by turns; I was conscious of a wider and warmer expansion of feeling than I had ever experienced before; my very imagination seemed invigorated by breathing, as it were, in the same atmosphere with his. We parted early next morning—and when I again visited Dumfries, I went and wept over his grave. Forty years have now passed since his death, and in that time many poets have arisen to achieve a rapid and brilliant celebrity; but they seem the meteors of a lower sky; the flush passes hastily from the expanse, and we see but one great light looking steadily upon us from above. It is Burns who is exclusively the poet of his country. Other writers inscribe their names on the plaster which covers for the time the outside structure of society; his is engraved, like that of the Egyptian architect, on the ever-during granite within. The fame of the others rises and falls with the uncertain undulations of the mode on which they have reared it; his remains fixed and permanent, as the human nature on which it is based. Or, to borrow the figures Johnson

employs in illustrating the unfluctuating celebrity of a scarcely greater poet—"The sand heaped by one flood is scattered by another, but the rock always continues in its place. The stream of time, which is continually washing the dissoluble fabrics of other poets, passes, without injury, by the adamant of Shakspeare."

THE PROFESSOR'S TALES.

THE CONVIVIALISTS.

We must introduce our readers, with an apology for our abruptness, into a party of about half-a-dozen young gallants, who had evidently been making deep and frequent libations at the shrine of Bacchus. The loud bursts of hearty laughter which rang round the room like so many triple bobmajors, the leering eyes, the familiar diminutives with which the various parties addressed each other, and the frequent locking of hands together in a grasp the force of which was meant to express an ardour of social friendship which words were too weak to convey—all showed that the symposiasts had cleared the fences which prudence or selfishness set up in the sober intercourse of life, and were now, with loosened reins, spurring away over the free wild fields of fancy and fun. An immense quantity of walnut-shells—which the mercurial compotators had been amusing themselves by throwing at each other—lay scattered about the table and on the floor; two or three shivered wine glasses had been shoved into the centre of the table, the fragments glittering upon a pile of glorious Woodvilles, all speckled over, like Jacob's sheep; each man had one of the weeds stuck rakishly in the corner of his mouth, and was knocking off the ashes upon his deviled biscuits; and, to the right of the president's chair, a long straggling regiment of empty bottles gave dumb but eloquent proof of the bibulous capabilities of the company. Each man was talking vehemently to his neighbour, and every one for himself; in order, as a wag among them said,

to get through the work quickly, and jump at once to a conclusion. They were, as Sheridan has it, "arguing in platoons." There was one exception, however, to the boisterous mirth of the convivialists, in the person of Frank Elliot, in celebration of whose obtaining his medical degree the feast had been given. He was leaning back in his chair, gazing, with a slight curl of contempt on his lip, at the rude glee of his associates. He had distinguished himself so highly among his fellow-students, that one of the professors had, in the ceremony of the morning, singled him out, before all his contemporaries, with the highest eulogiums, and had predicted, in the most flattering manner, his certain celebrity in his profession. Perhaps the natural vanity which these public honours had created, the bright prospect which lay before him, and his being less excited than his companions—caused him to turn, with disgust, from the silly ribaldry and weak witticisms which circled round his table. Amid the uproar his silence was for some time unheeded; but at length Harry Whitaker, his old college chum, now lieutenant in his Majesty's navy, and with a considerable portion of broad sailor's humour and slang, observed it, and slapping him roundly on the back, cried, "Hilloa, Frank! what are you dodging about?—quizzing the rig of your convoy, because they have too much light duck set to walk steadily through the water?"

"Frank! why, isn't he asleep all this time? I haven't heard his voice this half hour," exclaimed another.

> "'Parce meum, quisquis tanges cava marmora somnum
> Rumpere; sive bibas, sive lavere, tace,'"

said Elliot beseechingly.

"Come, come," said Harry, "none of your heathenish lingo over the mahogany. Boys! I move that Frank be made to swallow a tumbler of port for using bad language,

and to make him fit company for the rest of us honest fellows."

"*Fiat experimentum in corpore vili*," squeaked a first year medical student, shoving the lighted end of his cigar, by mistake, into his mouth when he had delivered his sentence, and then springing up and sputtering out a mighty oath and a quantity of hot tobacco ashes.

"Ashes to ashes," cried Harry, filling up a tumbler to the brim; "we'll let you off this time, as you're a fire-eater; but rally round, lads, and see this land shark swallow his grog."

"Nay, but, my friends"——began Frank, seeing, with horror, that the party had gathered round him, and that Harry held the glass inexorably in his mouth.

"Get a gag rigged," shouted the young sailor; "we'll find a way into his grog shop."

"Upon my word, Whitaker," said Frank, with a ludicrous intonation of voice, between real anger and distress, "this is too hard on one who has filled fairly from the first—to punish him without an inquiry into the justice of the case."

"Jeddart justice—hang first, and judge after!" roared a student from the sylvan banks of the Jed.

"No freeman can, under any pretence," hiccupped a young advocate, who was unable to rise from his chair, "be condemned, except by the legal decision of his peers, or by the law of the land. So sayeth the Magna Charta—King John—(*hic*)—right of all freeborn Englishmen—including thereby all inhabitants of Great Britain, incorporated at the Union—*hic*—and Ireland."

Whitaker set the tumbler down in despair, finding that his companions, like the generality of raw students, were so completely wedded to their pedantry, that the fine, if insisted on, would have to go all round.

"Let's have a song, Rhimeson," cried Frank, very glad

to escape from his threatened bumper, and still fearful that it might be insisted upon; "a song extempore, as becomes a poet in his cups, and in thine own vein; for what says Spenser?—

> 'For Bacchus' fruit is friend to Phœbus wise;
> And when, with wine, the brain begins to sweat,
> The numbers flow as fast as spring doth rise.'"

"By Jove, boys! you shall have it," cried Rhimeson, filling his glass with unsteady hand, and muttering, from the same prince of poets—

> "'Who can counsell a thirstie soule,
> With patience to forbeare the offred bowle?'"

"That is the pure well of English undefiled, old fellows, and so here goes—'The Lass we Love!'

TUNE—'*Duncan Davison.*'

"Come, fill your glass, my trusty friend,
And fill it sparkling to the brim—
A flowing bumper, bright and strong—
And push the bottle back again;
For what is man without his drink?
An oyster prison'd in his shell;
A rushlight in the vaults of death;
A rattlesnake without his tail.

CHORUS.

This world, we know, is full of cares,
And sorrow darkens every day;
But wine and love shall be the stars
To light us on our weary way.

Beyond yon hills there lives a lass,
Her name I dare not even speak;
The wine that sparkles in my glass
Was ne'er so rosy as her cheek.
Her neck is clearer than the spring
That streams the water lilies on;
So, here's to her I long have loved—
The fairest flower in Albion.

Let knaves and fools this world divide,
As they have done since Adam's time;
Let misers by their hoards abide,
And poets weave their rotten rhyme;
But ye, who, in an hour like this,
Feel every pulse to rapture move,
Fill high! each lip the goblet kiss—
The pledge shall be—'The Lass we Love!'"

After a good deal of roaritorious applause, the young gentlemen began to act upon the hint contained in the song, and each to give, as a toast, the lady of his heart. When it came to Elliot's turn, he declared he was unable to fulfil the conditions of the toast, as there was not a woman in the world for whom he had the slightest predilection.

"Why, thou personified snowball! thou human icicle!" cried Whitaker.

"Say an avalanche," interrupted Frank; "for, when once my heart is shaken, it will be as irresistible in its course as one of these 'thunderbolts of snow.'"

"Still, it's nothing but cold snow, for all that," cried Harry.

"Who talks of Frank Elliot and love in the same breath?" cried Rhimeson; "why, his heart is like a rock, and love, like a torpid serpent, enclosed in it."

"True," replied Frank; "but, you know, these same serpents sting as hard as ever when once they get into the open air; besides, love, as the shepherd in Virgil discovered, is an inhabitant of the rocks."

"Confound the fellow! he's a walking apothegm—as consequential as a syllogism!" muttered Harry; "but come now, Frank, let us have the inexpressive she, without backing and filling any longer."

"Upon my word, Harry, it is out of my power; but, in a few weeks, I hope to"——said Elliot.

"Hope, Frank, hope, my good fellow, is a courtier very

pleasant and agreeable in his conversation, but very much given to forget his promises. But I'll tell you, Frank, since you won't give a toast, I will, because I know it will punish you—so, gentlemen"——

The toast was only suited for the meridian of the place in which it was given, and we will, therefore, be excused from repeating it. But Whitaker had judged rightly that he had punished his friend, who, from the strictness of his education, and a certain delicacy in his opinions respecting women, could never tolerate the desecration of these opinions by the libertine ribaldry which forms so great a part of the conversation of many men after the first bottle. Frank's brow darkened, his keen eye turned with a glance of indignation to Harry; and he was prevented only by the circumstance of being in his own house, from instantly kicking him out of the room.

"Look at Frank now, gentles," continued the young sailor, when the mirth had subsided; "his face is as long as a ropewalk, while every one of yours is as broad as the main hatchway. He has a reverence for women as great as I have for my own tight, clean, sprightly craft; but because a fellow kicks one of my loose spars, or puts it to a base use, I'm not to quarrel with him, as if he had called my vessel a collier, eh? Frank, my good fellow, you're too sober; you're thinking too much of yourself; you're looking at the world with convex glasses; and thus the world seems little—you yourself only great; but, recollect, everybody looks through a convex glass; and that's vanity, Frank:—there, now! the murder's out."

"Nay, Harry," cried Rhimeson, goodnaturedly; for he saw Elliot's nether lip grow white with suppressed passion; "don't push Frank too hard, for charity's sake."

"Charity, to be sure!" interrupted Harry; "but consider what I must have suffered if I had not got that dead weight pitched overboard. I was labouring in the trough,

man, and would have foundered with that spite in my hold. Charity begins at home."

"'Tis a pity that the charity of many persons ends there too," said Frank drily.

"Frank's wit is like the King of Prussia's regiment of death," said the young seaman—"it gives no quarter. But come now, my lads, rig me out a female craft fit for that snow-blooded youngster to go captain of in the voyage of matrimony; do it shipshape, and bear a hand. I would try it myself; but the room looks, to my eyes, as it were filled with dancing logarithms; and then he's so cold, slow, misty-hearted"——

"That if," cried Rhimeson, interrupting him, "he addresses a lady as cold, slow, and misty-hearted as himself, they may go on courting the whole course of their natural lives, like the assymptotes of a hyperbola, which approach nearer and nearer, *ad infinitum*, without the possibility of ever meeting."

"Ha, ha, ha!—ay," shouted Harry; "and if he addresses one of a sanguine temperament, there will be a pretty considerable traffic of quarrels carried on between them, typified and illustrated very well by the constant commerce of heat which is maintained between the poles and the equator, by the agency of opposite currents in the atmosphere. By Jove! Frank, matrimony presents the fire of two batteries at you; one rakes you fore and aft, and the other strikes between wind and water."

"And pray, Harry, what sort of a consort will you sail with yourself?" inquired Rhimeson. This was, perhaps, a question, of all others, that the young sailor would have wished to avoid answering at that time. He was the accepted lover of the sister of his friend Elliot—and, at the moment he was running Frank down, to be, as he himself might have said, brought up standing, was sufficiently disagreeable.

"Come, come, Harry," cried the young poet, seeing the sailor hesitate; "let's have her from skysail-mast fid to keel—from starboard to larboard stunsails—from the tip of the flying jib-boom to the taffrail."

"They're all fireships, Rhimeson!" replied Harry, with forced gaiety—for he was indignant at Elliot's keen and suspicious glance—"and, if I do come near them, it shall always be to windward, for the Christian purpose of blowing them out of the water."

"A libertine," said Frank, significantly, "reviles women just in the same way that licentious priests lay the blame of the disrespect with which parsons are treated on the irreligion of the laity."

"I don't understand either your wit or your manner, Frank," replied Harry, giving a lurch in his chair; "but this I know, that I don't care a handful of shakings for either of them; and I say still, that women are all fireships—keep to windward of them—pretty things to try your young gunners at; but, if you close with them, you're gone, that's all."

"I'll tell you what you're very like, just now, Harry," said Frank—who had been pouring down glass after glass of wine, as if to quench his anger—"you're just like a turkey cock after his head has been cut off, which will keep stalking on in the same gait for several yards before he drops."

"Elliot! do you mean to insult me?" cried Whitaker, springing furiously from his seat.

"I leave that to the decision of your own incomparable judgment, sir," replied Elliot, bowing, with a sneer just visible on his features.

"If I thought so, Frank, I would——but it's impossible; you are my oldest friend." And the young sailor sat down with a moody brow.

"What would you, sir?" said Elliot, in a tone of calm

contempt; "bear it meekly, I presume? Nay, do not look big, and clench your hands, sir, unless, like Bob Acres, you feel your valour oozing out at your palms, and are striving to retain it!"

"I'll tell you what, Elliot," cried the young sailor, again springing to his feet, and seizing a decanter of wine by the neck, "I don't know what prevents me from driving this at your head."

"It would be quite in keeping with the rest of your gentlemanly conduct, sir," replied Frank, still keeping his seat, and looking at Harry with the most cool and provoking derision; "but I'll tell you why you don't—you dare not!"

"But that you are Harriet Elliot's brother"——began Harry, furiously.

"Scoundrel!" thundered Elliot, rising suddenly, and making a stride towards the young sailor, while the veins of his brow protruded like lines of cordage; "utter that name again, before me, with these blasphemous lips"——

Elliot had scarce, however, let fall the opprobrious epithet, ere the decanter flew, with furious force, from Whitaker's hand, and, narrowly missing Frank's head, was shivered on the wall beyond.

In a moment the young sailor was in the nervous grasp of Frank, who, apparently without the slightest exertion of his vast strength, lifted up the comparatively slight form of Whitaker, and laid him on his back on the floor.

"Be grateful, sir," said he, pressing the prostrate youth firmly down with one hand; "be grateful to the laws of hospitality, which, though you may think it a slight matter to violate, prevent me from striking you in my own house, or pitching you out of the window. Rise, sir, and begone."

Harry rose slowly; and it was almost fearful to see the change which passion had wrought in a few moments on his features. The red flush of drunken rage was entirely

gone, and the livid cheek, the pale quivering lip, and collected eye, which had usurped its place, showed that the degradation he had just undergone had completely sobered him, and given his passion a new but more malignant character. He stood for a brief period in moody silence, whilst the rest of the young men closed round him and Frank, with the intention of reconciling them. At length he moved away towards the door, pushing his friends rudely aside; but turning, before he left the room, he said, in a voice trembling with suppressed emotion—

"I hope to meet Mr. Elliot where his mere brute strength will be laid aside for more honourable and equitable weapons."

"I shall be happy, at any place or time, to show my sense of Mr. Whitaker's late courtesy," replied Frank, bowing slightly, and then drawing up his magnificent figure to its utmost height.

"Let it be *now*, then, sir," said the young sailor, stepping back into the centre of the room, and pointing to a brace of sharps, which, among foils and masks, hung on one of the walls.

"Oh, no, no!—for God's sake, not now!" burst from every one except Frank.

"It can neither be now nor here, sir," replied he, firmly, motioning Whitaker haughtily to the door.

"Gentlemen," said Harry, turning round to his friends with a loud laugh of derision, "you see that vanity is stronger than valour. Pompey's troops were beaten at the battle of Pharsalia, only because they were afraid of their pretty faces. Upon my soul, I believe Mr. Elliot's handsome features stand in the way of his gallantry."

"Begone, trifler!" cried Frank, relapsing into fury.

"Coward!" shouted the young sailor at the top of his voice.

"Ha!" exclaimed Elliot, starting, as if an adder had

stung him; then, with a convulsive effort controlling his rage, he took down the swords, threw one of them upon the table, and putting his arm into Rhimeson's, beckoned the young sailor to follow him, and left the apartment. As it was in vain that the remainder of the young men attempted to restrain Whitaker, they agreed to accompany him in a body, in order, if possible, to prevent mischief; all but the young advocate whom we have before mentioned, who, having too great a respect for the law to patronise other methods of redressing grievances, ran off to secure the assistance of the city authorities.

The moon, which had been wading among thick masses of clouds, emerged into the clear blue sky, and scattered her silver showers of light on the rocks and green sides of Arthur's Seat, as the young men reached a secluded part in the valley at its foot.

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed the young poet to Frank, as they turned to wait for Whitaker and his companions, "how horrible it is to desecrate a scene and hour like this by violence—perhaps, Elliot, by *murder!*" Frank did not reply; his thoughts were at that time with his aged mother and his now unprotected sister; and he bitterly reflected that to whoever of them, in the approaching contest, wounds or death might fall, poor Harriet would have equally to suffer. But the young sailor, still boiling with rage, at that moment approached, and throwing his cloak on a rock, cried, "Now, sir!" and placed himself in attitude.

Their swords crossed, and, for a brief space, nothing was heard but the hard breathing of the spectators and the clashing of the steel, as the well-practised combatants parried each other's thrusts. Elliot was, incomparably, the cooler of the two, and he threw away many chances in which his adversary placed himself open to a palpable hit, his aim being to disarm his antagonist without wounding

him. An unforeseen accident prevented this. Whitaker, pressing furiously forward, struck his foot against a stone, and falling, received Elliot's sword in his body, the hilt, striking with a deep, quick, sullen sound against his breast. The young sailor fell with a sharp aspiration of anguish; and his victorious adversary, horrified by the sight, and rendered silent by the sudden revulsion of his feelings, stood, for some time, gazing at his sword, from the point of which the blood drops trickled slowly, and fell on the dewy sward. "'Tis the blood of my dearest, oldest friend —of my brother; and shed by my hand!" he muttered at length, flinging away the guilty blade. His only answer was the groans of his victim, and the shrill whistle of the weapon as it flew through the air.

"Harry, my friend, my brother!" cried the young man, in a tone of unutterable anguish, kneeling down on the grass, and pressing the already cold clammy hand of his late foe."

"Your voice is pleasant to me, Frank, even in death," muttered the young sailor, in a thick obstructed voice. "I have done you wrong—forgive me while I can hear you; and tell Harriet—oh!"

"I do, I do forgive you; but, oh! how shall I forgive myself? Speak to me, Harry!" And Elliot, frantic at the sight of the bloody motionless heap before him, repeated the name of his friend till his voice rose into a scream of agony that curdled the very blood of his friends, and re-echoed among the rocks above, like the voices of tortured demons. Affairs were in this situation when the young advocate came running breathless up to them, and saw, at a glance, that he was too late. "Fly, for Heaven's sake! fly, Elliot; here is money; you may need it," he cried; "the officers will be here instantly, and your existence may be the forfeit of this unhappy chance. Fly! every moment lost is a stab at your life!"

"Be it so," replied the wretched young man, rising and gazing with folded arms down upon his victim; "what have I to do with life?—*he* has ceased to live. I will not leave him."

His friends joined in urging Elliot to instant flight; but he only pointed to the body, and said, in the low tones of calm despair: "Do you think I can leave him now, and thus? Let those fly who are in love with life; I shall remain and meet my fate."

"Frank Elliot!" muttered the wounded man, reviving from the fainting fit into which he had fallen; "come near to me, for I am very weak, and swear to grant the request I have to make, as you would have my last moments free from the bitterest agony."

Elliot flung himself on the ground by the side of his friend, and, in a voice broken by anguish, swore to attend to his words. "Then leave this spot immediately," said the young sailor, speaking slowly and with extreme difficulty; "and should this be my last request—as I feel it must be—get out of the country till the present unhappy affair is forgotten; and moreover, mark, Frank—and, my friends, attend to my words:—I entreat, I *command* you to lay the entire blame of this quarrel and its consequences on me. One of you will write to my poor father, and say it was my last request that he should consider Elliot innocent, and that I give my dying curse to any one who shall attempt to revenge my death. Ah! that was a pang! How dim your faces look in the moonlight! Your hand, dearest Frank, once more; and now away! Keep this, I charge you, from my Harriet—*my* Harriet! O God!" And, with a shudder, that shook visibly his whole frame, the unfortunate youth relapsed into insensibility. There was a brief pause, during which the feelings of the spectators may be better imagined than described, though, assuredly, admiration of the generous anxiety of the young sailor to

do justice to his friend was the prevailing sentiment of their minds. At length the stifled sound of voices, and the dimly seen forms of two or three men stealing towards them, within the shadow of the mountain, roused them from their reverie; and Rhimeson, who had not till now spoken, entreated Elliot to obey the dying request of his friend, and fly before the police reached them. "I have not before urged you to this," he said, "lest you should think it was from a selfish motive; for, as your second, I am equally implicated with you in this unhappy affair; but *now*," continued he, with melancholy emphasis, "there is nothing to be gained and everything to be hazarded by remaining."

The generous argument of the poet at length overcame Elliot's resolution; he bent down quickly and kissed the cold lips of his friend, then waving a silent adieu to the others, he quitted the melancholy scene. The police—for it proved to be they—were within a hundred yards of the spot when the young men left the rest of the group, and, instantly emerging from the shadow which had till now partially concealed them, the leader of the party directed one of his attendants to remain with the body, and set off, with two or three others, in pursuit of the fugitives.

"Follow me," cried Rhimeson, when he saw this movement of the pursuers; and springing as he spoke towards the entrance of a narrow defile which lay entirely in the shadow of the mountain. A deep convulsive sob burst from the pent-up bosom of Elliot ere he replied: "Leave me to my fate, my friend; I cannot fly; the weight of his blood crushes me!"

"This is childish, unjust," said Rhimeson, with strong emotion; "but once more, Frank, will you control this weakness and follow me, or will you slight the last wish of one friend, and sacrifice another, by remaining? for without you I will not stir. Now, choose."

"Lead on," said Elliot, rousing himself with a convulsive effort; and, striking into the gloom, the two young men sped forward with a step as fleet as that of the hunted deer.

Their pursuers having seen them stand, had slackened their pace, or it is probable the fugitives would have been captured before Rhimeson had prevailed on his friend to fly; but now, separating so as to intercept them if they deviated from the direct path, the policemen raised a loud shout and instantly gave chase. But the young poet, in his solitary rambles amid the noble scenery of Arthur's Seat and the adjoining valleys, had become intimately acquainted with every path which led through their romantic recesses; and he now sped along the broken footway which skirted the mountain-side with as much confidence as if he had trod on a level sward in the light of noonday. Elliot, having his mind diverted by the necessity of looking to his immediate preservation—for the path, strewed with fragments of rock, led along what might well be termed a precipice, of two or three hundred feet in height—roused up all his energies, and followed his friend with a speed which speedily left their pursuers far behind. Thus they held on for about a quarter of an hour, gradually and obliquely ascending the mountain side, until the voices of the policemen, calling to each other far down in the valley, proved that they had escaped the immediate danger which had threatened them. Still, however, Rhimeson kept on, though he relaxed his pace in order to hold some communication with his companion.

"We have distanced the bloodhounds for the nonce, Frank," he said; "these ale-swilling rascals cannot set a stout heart to a stey brae; but whither shall we go now? Edinburgh, perhaps Scotland, is too hot to hold us, and the point is how to get out of it. What do you advise?"

"I am utterly careless about it, Rhimeson; do as you think best," replied Elliot, in a tone of deep despondency.

"Cheer up, cheer up! my dear Frank," said the young poet, feigning a confidence of hope which his heart belied. "Whitaker may still recover; he is too gallant a fellow to be lost to us in a drunken brawl; and even if the worst should happen, it must still keep you from despair to reflect that you were forced into this rencontre, and that it was an unhappy accident, resulting from his own violence and not your intention, which deprived him of his life." Elliot stopped suddenly, and gazing down from the height which they had now reached into the valley, seemed to be searching for the spot where the fatal accident had taken place, as if to assist him in the train of thought which his friend's words had aroused. The dark group of human beings were seen dimly in the moonlight, moving with a slow pace along the hollow of the gorge towards the city, bearing along with them the body of the young sailor.

"Dear, dear Frank," said Rhimeson, deeply commiserating the anguish which developed itself in the clasped uplifted hands and shuddering frame of his unhappy friend, "bear up against this cruel accident like a man—he may still recover." Elliot moved away from the ridge which overlooked the valley, muttering, as if unconsciously—

> "'Action is momentary—
> The motion of a muscle this way or that;
> Suffering is long, obscure, and infinite!'*

How profound and awful is that sentiment!"

The sound of a piece of rock dislodged from the mountain side, and thundering and crashing down the steep, awakened Rhimeson from his contemplation of Elliot's grief; and, springing again to the brink of the almost precipitous descent, he saw that one of their pursuers had crept up by the inequalities of the rock, and was within a few yards of the summit.

* Wordsworth.

"Dog!" cried the young man, heaving off a fragment of rock, and in the act of dashing it down upon the unprotected head of the policeman, "offer to stir, and I will scatter your brains upon the cliffs!"

A shrill cry of terror burst from the poor fellow's lips as he gazed upwards at the frightful attitude of his enemy, and expected every moment to see the dreadful engine hurled at his head. The cry was answered by the shouts of his companions, who, by different paths, had arrived within a short distance of the fugitives.

"Retire miscreant! or I will send your mangled carcass down to the foot without your help," shouted Rhimeson, swinging the huge stone up to the extent of his arms. His answer was a pistol shot, which, whistling past his cheek, struck the uplifted fragment of rock with such force as to send a stunning feeling up to his very shoulders. The stone fell from his benumbed grasp, and, striking the edge of the cliff, bounded innocuous over the head of the policeman, who, springing upwards, was within a few feet of Rhimeson before he had fully recovered himself. "Away!" he cried, taking again the path up the mountain, and closely followed by Elliot, who, during the few moments in which the foregoing scene was being enacted, had remained almost motionless—"Away! give them a flying shot at least," continued he, feeling all the romance of his nature aroused by the circumstances in which he was placed. The policeman, however, who had only fired in self-defence, refrained from using his other pistol, now that the danger was past; but grasping it firmly in his hand, he followed the steps of the young men with a speed stimulated by the desire of revenge, and a kind of professional eagerness to capture so daring an offender. But, in spite of his exertions, the superior agility of the fugitives gradually widened the distance between them; and at length, as they emerged from the rocky ground upon the

smooth short grass, where a footfall could not be heard, the moon became again obscured by dark clouds, and Rhimeson, whispering his companion to observe his motions, turned short off the path they had been following, and struck eastward among the green hills towards the sea. They could hear the curse of the policeman, and the click of his pistol lock, as if he had intended to send a leaden messenger into the darkness in search of them. But the expected report did not follow; and, favoured by the continued obscurity of the night, they were, in a short time, descending the hill behind Duddingstone, which lies at the opposite extremity of the King's Park. Still continuing their route eastward, they walked forward at a rapid pace, consulting on their future movements. The sound of wheels rapidly approaching, interrupted their conversation. It was the south mail.

In a short time they were flying through the country towards Newcastle, at the rate of ten miles an hour, including stoppages. Elliot was at the river side, searching for a vessel to convey them to some part of the continent, and Rhimeson was dozing over a newspaper in the Turk's Head in that town, when a policeman entered, and, mistaking him for Elliot, took him into custody. How their route had been discovered, Rhimeson knew not; but he was possessed of sufficient presence of mind to personate his friend, and offer to accompany the police officer instantly back to Edinburgh, leaving a letter and a considerable sum of money for Elliot. In a few minutes, the generous fellow leaped into the post-chaise, with a heart as light as many a bridegroom when flying on the wings of love and behind the tails of four broken-winded hacks to some wilderness, where "transport and security entwine"—the anticipated scene of a delicious honey-moon. Elliot, while in search of a vessel, had fallen in with a young man whom he had known as a medical student at

Edinburgh, and who was now about to go as surgeon of a Greenland vessel, in order to earn, during the summer, the necessary sum for defraying his college expenses. He accompanied Elliot to his inn, and heard, during the way, the story of his misfortunes. It is unnecessary to describe Frank's surprise and grief at the capture of his friend, Rhimeson. At first, he determined instantly to return and relieve him from durance. But, influenced by the entreaties contained in Rhimeson's note, and by the arguments of the young Northumbrian, he at length changed this resolution, and determined on accepting the situation of surgeon in the whaling vessel for which his present companion had been about to depart. Frank presented the Northumbrian with a sum more than equal to the expected profits of the voyage, and received his thanks in tones wherein the natural roughness of his accent was increased to a fearful degree by the strength of his emotion. All things being arranged, Frank shook his acquaintance by the hand, and remarked that it would be well for him to keep out of the way for a while. So bidding the man of harsh aspirations adieu, he made his way to the coach, and, in twenty-four hours, was embarked in the *Labrador*, with a stiff westerly breeze ready to carry him away from all that he loved and dreaded.

Let the reader imagine that six months have passed over —and let him imagine, also, if he can, the anguish which the mother and sister of Elliot suffered on account of his mysterious disappearance. It was now September. The broad harvest moon was shining full upon the bosom of Teviot, and glittering upon the rustling leaves of the woods that overhang her banks, and pouring a flood of more golden light upon the already golden grain that waved—ripe for the sickle—along the margin of the lovely stream; the stars, few in number, but most brilliant, had taken their places in the sky; the owl was whooping from the

ivied tower; the corn-craik was calling drowsily; now and then the distant baying of a watch-dog startled the silence, otherwise undisturbed, save by the plaintive murmuring of the stream, which, as it flowed past, uttered such querulous sounds, that, as some one has happily expressed it, "one was almost tempted to ask what ailed it." A traveller was moving slowly up the side of the river, and ever and anon stopping, as if to muse over some particular object. It was Elliot. He had returned from Greenland, and, in disguise, had come to the place of his birth—to the dwelling of his mother and his sister; he had heard that his mother was ill—that anxiety, on his account, had reduced her almost to the grave—and that she was now but slowly recovering. He had been able to acquire no information respecting Whitaker; and the weight of his friend's blood lay yet heavy on his soul, for he considered himself as his murderer. It was with feelings of the most miserable anxiety that he approached the place of his birth. The stately beeches that lined the avenue which led to his mother's door were in sight; they stooped and raised their stately branches, with all the gorgeous drapery of leaves, as if they welcomed him back; the very river seemed to utter, in accents familiar to him, that he was now near the hall of his fathers. Oh! how is the home of our youth enshrined in our most sacred affections! by what multitudinous fibres is it entwined with our heart-strings!—it is part of our being—its influences remain with us for ever, though years spent in foreign lands divide us from "our early home that cradled life and love." Elliot was framed to feel keenly these sacred influences—and often, even after brief absences from home, he had experienced them in deep intensity; but now the throb of exultation was kept down by the crushing weight of remorse, and the gush of tenderness checked by bitter fears. He entered the avenue which led up to the house. Yonder

were the windows of his mother's chamber—there was a light in it. He would have given worlds to have seen before him the interior. As he quickened his pace, he heard the sound of voices in the avenue. He turned aside out of the principal walk; and, standing under the branches of a venerable beech, which swept down almost to the ground, and fully concealed him, he waited the approach of the speakers, in hopes of hearing some intelligence respecting his family. Through the screen of the leaves he presently saw that it was a pair of lovers, for their arms were locked around each other, and their cheeks were pressed together as they came down the avenue—treading as slowly as though they were attempting to show how much of rest there might be in motion.

"To-morrow, then, my sweet Harriet," said the young man, "I leave you; and though it is torture to me to be away from your side, yet I have resolved never again to see you until I have made the most perfect search for your brother; until I can win a dearer embrace than any I have yet received, by placing him before you."

"Would to heaven it may be so!" replied the young lady; "but my mother—how will I be able to support her when you are gone, dearest Henry? She is kept up only by the happy strains of hope which your very voice creates. How shall I, myself unsupported, ever keep her from despondency? Oh! she will sink—she will die! Remain with us, Henry; and let us trust to providence to restore my brother to us—if he be yet alive!"

"Ask it not, my beloved Harriet, I beseech you," said the young man, "lest I be unable to deny you. If your brother, as is likely, has sought some foreign land, and remains in ignorance of my recovery from the wounds I received from him, how shall I answer to myself—how shall I even dare to ask for this fair hand—how shall I ever hope to rest upon your bosom in peace—if I do not

use every possible means to discover him? O my dear Elliot—friend of my youth—if thou couldest translate the language of my heart, as it beats at this moment—if thou couldest hear my sacred resolve!"—

"Whitaker, my friend! Harriet, my beloved sister!" cried Elliot, bursting out from beneath the overspreading beech, and snatching his sister in his arms—"I am here—I see all—I understand the whole of the events—how much too graciously brought about for me, Father of mercies! I acknowledge. Let us now go to my mother."

It is in scenes such as this that we find how weak words are to describe the feelings of the actors—the rapid transition of events—the passions that chase one another over the minds and hearts of those concerned, like waves in a tempest. Nor is it necessary. The reader who can feel and comprehend such situations as those in which the actors in our little tale are placed, are able to draw, from their own hearts and imaginations, much fitter and more rapidly sketched portraitures of the passions which are awakened, the feelings that develop themselves in such situations and with such persons, than can be painted in words.

The harvest moon was gone, and another young moon was in the skies, when Whitaker, and the same young lady of whom we before spoke, trode down the avenue, locked in each other's arms, and with cheek pressed to cheek. They talked of a thousand things most interesting to persons in their situation—for they were to be married on the morrow—but, perhaps, not so interesting to our readers, many of whom may have performed in the same scenes.

Elliot's mother was recovered; and he himself was happy, or, at least, he put on all the trappings of happiness; for, in a huge deer-skin Esquimaux dress, which he had brought from Greenland, he danced at his sister's wedding until the great bear had set in the sea, and the autumn sun began to peer through the shutters of the drawing-room of his ancient hall.

PHILIPS GREY.

"Death takes a thousand shapes:
Borne on the wings of sullen slow disease,
Or hovering o'er the field of bloody fight,
In calm, in tempest, in the dead of night,
Or in the lightning of the summer moon;
In all how terrible!"

Among the many scenes of savage sublimity which the lowlands of Scotland display, there is none more impressive in its solitary grandeur, than that in the neighbourhood of Loch Skene, on the borders of Moffatdale. At a considerable elevation above the sea, and surrounded by the loftiest mountains in the south of Scotland, the loch has collected its dark mass of waters, astonishing the lovers of nature by its great height above the valley which he has just ascended, and, by its still and terrible beauty, overpowering his mind with sentiments of melancholy and awe. Down the cliffs which girdle in the shores of the loch, and seem to support the lofty piles of mountains above them, a hundred mountain torrents leap from rock to rock, flashing and roaring, until they reach the dark reservoir beneath. A canopy of grey mist almost continually shrouds from the sight the summits of the hills, leaving the imagination to guess at those immense heights which seem to pierce the very clouds of heaven. Occasionally, however, this veil is withdrawn, and then you may see the sovereign brow of Palmoodie encircled with his diadem of snow, and the green summits of many less lofty hills arranged round him, like courtiers uncovered before their monarch. Amid this scene, consecrated to solitude and the most sombre melancholy, no sound comes upon the mountain breeze, save the wail of the plover, or the whir

of the heathcock's wing, or, haply, the sullen plunge of a trout leaping up in the loch.

At times, indeed, the solitary wanderer may be startled by the scream of the grey eagle, as dropping with the rapidity of light from his solitary cliff, he shoots past, enraged that his retreat is polluted by the presence of man, and then darts aloft into the loftiest chambers of the sky; or, dallying with the piercing sunbeams, is lost amid their glory.* At the eastern extremity of the loch, the superfluous waters are discharged by a stream of no great size, but which, after heavy showers, pours along its deep and turbid torrent with frightful impetuosity.

After running along the mountain for about half a mile, it suddenly precipitates itself over the edge of a rocky ridge which traverses its course, and, falling sheer down a height of three hundred feet, leaps and bounds over some smaller precipices, until, at length, far down in Moffatdale, it entirely changes its character, and pursues a calm and peaceful course through a fine pastoral country. Standing

* Round about the shores of Loch Skene the Ettrick Shepherd herded the flocks of his master, and fed his boyish fancies with the romance and beauty which breathes from every feature of the scene. One day, when we were at Loch Skene on a fishing excursion with him, he pointed up to the black crag overhanging the water, and said—"You see the edge o' that cliff; I ance as near dropped frae it intil eternity as I dinna care to think o'. I was herdin' aboot here, and lang and lang I thocht o' speelin' up to the eyry, frae which I could hear the young eagles screamin' as plain as my ain bonny Mary Gray (his youngest daughter) when she's no pleased wi' the colley; but the fear o' the auld anes aye keepit me frae the attempt. At last, ae day, when I was at the head o' the cliff, and the auld eagle away frae the nest, I took heart o' grace, and clambered down (for there was nae gettin' up). Weel, sir, I was at the maist kittle bit o' the craig, wi' my foot on a bit ledge just wide enough to bear me, and sair bothered wi' my plaid and stick, when, guid saf's! I heard the boom o' the auld eagle's wings come whaff, whaffing through the air, and in a moment o' time she brought me sic a whang wi' her wing, as she rushed enraged by, and then turning short again and fetching me anither, I thought I was gane for ever; but providence gave me presence o' mind to regain my former resting-place, and there flinging off my plaid, I keepit aye nobbing the bird wi' my stick till I was out o' danger. It was a fearsome time!" It would have been dreadful had the pleasure which "Kilmeny," "Queen Hynde," and the hundred other beautiful creations which the glorious old bard has given us, been all thus destroyed "at one fell swoop."

on the brow of a mountain which overlooks the fall, the eye takes in at once the whole of the course which we have described; and, to a poetical mind, which recognises in mountain scenery the cradle of liberty and the favourite dwelling-place of imagination, the character of the stream seems a type of the human mind: stormy, bounding, and impetuous, when wrapped up in the glorious feelings which belong to romantic countries; peaceful, dull, and monotonous, amid the less interesting lowlands. Yet, after indulging in such a fancy for a time, another reflection arises, which, if it be less pleasing and poetical, is, perhaps, more useful—that the impetuous course of the mountain torrent, though gratifying to the lover of nature, is unaccompanied with any other benefit to man, while the stream that pursues its unpretending path through the plains, bestows fertility on a thousand fields. Such thoughts as these, however, only arise in the mind when it has become somewhat familiar with the surrounding scenes. The roar of the cataract, the savage appearance of the dark rocks that border the falling waters, and that painful feeling which the sweeping and inevitable course of the stream produces, at first paralyze the mind, and, for some time after it has recovered its tone, occupy it to the exclusion of every other sentiment.

And now, gentle reader, let us walk toward the simple stone seat, which some shepherd boy has erected under yon silvery-stemmed birch tree, where the sound of the waterfall comes only in a pleasant monotone, and where the most romantic part of old Scotland is spread beneath our feet. There you see the eternal foam of the torrent, without being distracted with its roar; and you can trace the course of the stream till it terminates in yon clear and pellucid pool at the foot of the hill, which seems too pure for aught but—

"A mirror and a bath for beauty's youngest daughters;"

yet, beautiful in its purity as it seems, it is indeed the scene of the following true and terrible tale:—

Philips Grey was one of the most active young shepherds in the parish of Traquair. For two or three years he had carried off the medal given at the St. Ronan's border games to him who made the best high leap; and, at the last meeting of the games, he had been first at the running hop-step-and-jump; had beat all competitors in running; and, though but slightly formed, had gained the second prize for throwing the hammer—a favourite old Scottish exercise, but almost unknown in England. Athletic sports were, indeed, his favourite pursuit, and he cultivated them with an ardour which very few of our readers will be able to imagine. But among the shepherds, and, indeed, all inhabitants of pastoral districts, he who excels in these sports possesses a superiority over his contemporaries, which cannot but be gratifying in the highest degree to its possessor. His name is known far and wide; his friendship is courted by the men; and his hand, either as a partner in a country dance, or in a longer "minuet of the heart," marriage, is coquetted for by the maidens: he, in fact, possesses all the power which superiority of intellect bestows in more populous and polished societies. But it is by no means the case, as is often said, that ardour in the pursuit of violent sports is connected with ignorance or mediocrity of intellect. On the contrary, by far the greater number of victors at games of agility and strength, will be found to possess a degree of mental energy, which is, in fact, the power that impels them to corporeal excitement, and is often the secret of their success over more muscular antagonists. Philips Grey, in particular, was a striking instance of this fact. Notwithstanding his passion for athletic sports, he had found time, while on the hill-side tending his flock, or in the long winter nights, to make himself well acquainted with the Latin classics. This is

by no means uncommon among the Scottish peasantry. Smith, and Black, and Murray, are not singular instances of self-taught scholars; for there is scarce a valley in Scotland in which you will not hear of one or more young men of this stamp. Philips also played exquisitely on the violin, and had that true taste for the simple Scottish melody which can, perhaps, be nowhere cultivated so well as among the mountains and streams which have frequently inspired them. Many a time, when you ask the name of the author of some sweet ballad which the country girl is breathing amongst these hills, the tear will start into her eye as she answers—"Poor Philips Grey, that met a dreadful death at the Grey Mare's Tail." With these admirable qualities, Philips unfortunately possessed a mood of mind which is often an attendant on genius—he was subject to attacks of the deepest melancholy. Gay, cheerful, humorous, active, and violent in his sports as he was, there were periods when the darkest gloom overshadowed his mind, and when his friends even trembled for his reason. It is said that he frequently stated his belief that he should die a dreadful death. Alas! that this strange presentiment should have indeed been prophetic! It is not surprising that Philips Grey, with his accomplishments, should have won the heart of a maiden somewhat above his own degree, and even gained the consent of her father to his early marriage. The old man dwelt in Moffatdale; and the night before Philips' wedding-day, he and his younger brother walked over to his intended father-in-law's house, in order to be nearer the church. That night the young shepherd was in his gayest humour; his bonny bride was by his side, and looking more beautiful than ever; he sang his finest songs, played his favourite tunes, and completely bewitched his companions. All on a sudden, while he was relating some extraordinary feat of strength which had been performed by one of his acquaint-

ances, he stopped in the middle of the story, and exchanged the animation with which he was speaking for silence and a look of the deepest despair. His friends were horror-struck; but as he insisted that nothing was the matter with him, and as his younger brother said that he had not been in bed for two nights, the old man dismissed the family, saying—"Gang awa to bed, Philips, my man, and get a sound sleep; or if you do lie wauken a wee bittie, it's nae great matter: odd! it's the last nicht my bonny Marion 'll keep ye lying wauken for her sake. Will't no, my bonnie doo?"

"Deed, faither, I dinna ken," quoth Marion, simply, yet archly; and the party separated.

Philips, however, walked down the burn side, in order to try if the cool air would dissipate his unaccountable anxiety. But, in spite of his efforts, a presentiment of some fatal event gathered strength in his mind, and he involuntarily found himself revolving the occurrences of his past life. Here he found little to condemn, for he had never received an unkind word from his father, who was now in the grave; and his mother was wearing out a green and comfortable old age beneath his own roof. He had brought up his younger brothers, and they were now in a fair way to succeed in life. He could not help feeling satisfied at this, yet why peculiarly at this time he knew not. Then came the thought of his lovely Marion, and the very agony which at once rushed on his heart had well nigh choked him. Immediately, however, the fear which had hung about him seemed to vanish; for, strange and mysterious as it was, it was not sufficiently powerful to withstand the force of that other horrible imagination. So he returned to the house, and was surprised to find himself considering how his little property should be distributed after his death. When he reached the door, he stopped for a moment, overcome with this pertinacity in

the supernatural influence which seemed exercised over him; and at length, with gloomy resolution, entered the house. His brother was asleep, and a candle was burning on the table. He sank down into a chair, and went on with his little calculations respecting his will. At length, having decided upon all these things, and having fixed upon the churchyard of St. Mary's for his burial place, he arose from his chair, took up the candle and crossed the room towards his brother, intending to convey his wishes to him.

The boy lay on the front side of one of those beds with sliding doors, so common in Scotland; and beyond him there was room for Philips to lie down. Something bright seemed gleaming in the dark recess of the bed. He advanced the candle, and beheld—oh, sight of horror!—a plate upon what bore the shape of a coffin, bearing the words—"Philips Grey, aged 23." For a moment he gazed steadily upon it, and was about to stretch out his hand towards it, when the lid slowly rose, and he beheld a mutilated and bloody corpse, the features of which were utterly undistinguishable, but which, by some unearthly impulse, he instantly knew to be his own. Still he kept a calm and unmoved gaze at it, though the big drops of sweat stood on his brow with the agony of his feelings; and, while he was thus contemplating the dreadful revelation, it gradually faded away, and at length totally vanished. The power which had upheld him seemed to depart along with the phantom; his sight failed him, and he fell on the floor.

Presently he recovered, and found himself in bed, with his brother by his side chafing his temples. He explained everything that had occurred, seemed calm and collected, shook his head when his brother attempted to explain away the vision, and finally sank into a tranquil sleep.

Whether the horrible resemblance of his own coffin and

mutilated corpse was in reality revealed to him by the agency of some supernatural power, or whether it was (as sceptics will say) the natural effect of his hypochondriac state of mind, producing an optical deception, we will not take upon us to determine; certain, however, it is, that with a calm voice and collected manner he described to his brother James, a scene the dreadful reality of which was soon to be displayed.

In the morning Philips awoke, cheerful and calm, the memory of last night's occurrences seeming but a dreadful dream. On the grass before the door he met his beloved Marion, who, on that blessed Sabbath, was to become his wife. The sight of her perfect loveliness, arrayed in a white dress, emblem of purity and innocence, filled his heart with rapture; and as he clasped her in his arms, every sombre feeling vanished away. It is not our intention to describe the simplicity of the marriage ceremony, or the happiness which filled Philips Grey's heart during that Sabbath morning, while sitting in the church by the side of his lovely bride.

They returned home, and, in the afternoon, the young couple, together with James Grey and the bride's-maid, walked out among the glades of Craigieburn wood, a spot rendered classic by the immortal Burns. Philips had gathered some of the wild flowers that sprang among their feet—the pale primrose, the fair anemone, and the drooping blue bells of Scotland—and wove them into a garland. As he was placing them on Marion's brow, and shading back the long flaxen tresses that hung across her cheek, he said, gaily—"There wants but a broad water lily to place in the centre of thy forehead, my sweet Marion; for where should the fairest flower of the valley be, but on the brow of its queen? Come with me, Jamie, and in half an hour we will bring the fairest that floats on Loch Skene." So, kissing the cheek of his bride, Philips and his brother

set off up the hill with the speed of the mountain deer. They arrived at the foot of the waterfall, panting, and excited with their exertions. By climbing up the rocks close to the stream, the distance to the loch is considerably shortened; and Philips, who had often clambered to the top of the Bitch Craig, a high cliff on the Manor Water, proposed to his brother that they should "speel the height." The other, a supple agile lad, instantly consented. "Gie me your plaid then, Jamie, my man—it will maybe fash ye," said Philips; "and gang ye first, and keep weel to the hill side." Accordingly the boy gave his brother the plaid and began the ascent. While Philips was knotting his brother's plaid round his body above his own, a fox peeped out of his hole half way up the cliff, and thinking flight advisable, dropped down the precipice. Laughing till the very echoes rang, Philips followed his brother. Confident in his agility, he ascended with a firm step till he was within a few yards of the summit. James was now on the top of the precipice, and looking down on his brother, and not knowing the cause of his mirth, exclaimed—"Daursay, callant, ye're fey."* In a moment the memory of his last night's vision rushed on Philips Grey's mind, his eyes became dim, his limbs powerless, he dropped off the very edge of the giddy precipice, and his form was lost in the black gulf below. For a few minutes, James felt a sickness of heart which rendered him almost insensible, and sank down on the grass lest he should fall over the cliff. At length, gathering strength from very terror, he advanced to the edge of the cataract and gazed downwards. There, about two-thirds down the fall, he could perceive the remains of his brother, mangled and mutilated; the body being firmly wedged between two projecting points of rock, whereon the descending water

* "Fey," a Scottish word, expressive of that unaccountable and violent mirth which is supposed frequently to portend sudden death.—Ed.

streamed, while the bleeding head hung dangling, and almost separated from the body—and, turned upwards, discovered to the horrified boy the starting eye-balls of his brother, already fixed in death, and the teeth clenched in the bitter agony which had tortured his passing spirit.

It is scarcely necessary to detail the consequences of this cruel accident. Assistance was procured, and the mangled body conveyed to the house of Marion's father, whence, a few short hours ago, the young shepherd had issued in vigour and happiness. When the widowed bride saw James Grey return to them with horror painted on his features, she seemed instantly to divine the full extent of her misfortune; she sank down on the grass, with the unfinished garland of her dead lover in her hand, and in this state was carried home. For two days she passed from one fit to another; but on the night of the second day she sank into a deep sleep. That night, James Grey was watching the corpse of his brother; the coffin was placed on the very bed where they had slept two nights ago. The plate gleamed from the shadowy recess, and the words—"Philips Grey, aged 23," were distinctly visible. While James was reflecting on the prophetic vision of his brother, a figure, arrayed in white garments, entered the room and moved towards the dead body. It was poor Marion.

She slowly lifted the lid of the coffin, and gazed long and intently on the features of her dead husband. Then, turning round to James, she uttered a short shrill shriek, and fell backwards on the corpse. She hovered between life and death for a few days, and at length expired. She now lies by the side of her lover, in the solitary burial ground of St. Mary's.

Such is the event which combines, with others not less dark and terrible, to throw a wild interest around those

gloomy rocks. Many a time you will hear the story from the inhabitants of those hills; and, until fretted away by the wind and rain, the plaid and the bonnet of the unfortunate Philips Grey hung upon the splintered precipice to attest the truth of the tale.

DONALD GORM.

IN a remote corner of Assynt, one of the most remote and savage districts in the Highlands of Scotland, there is a certain wild and romantic glen, called Eddernahulish. In the picturesqueness of this glen, however, neither wood nor rock has any share; and, although it may be difficult to conceive of any place possessing that character without these ordinary adjuncts, it is, nevertheless, true, that Eddernahulish, with neither tree nor precipice, is yet strikingly picturesque. The wide sweep of the heath-clad hills whose gradual descents form the spacious glen, and the broad and brawling stream careering through its centre, give the place an air of solitude and of quiet repose that, notwithstanding its monotony, is exceedingly impressive.

On gaining any of the many points of elevation that command a view of this desolate strath, you may descry, towards its western extremity, a small, rude, but massive stone bridge, grey with age; for it was erected in the time of that laird of Assynt who rendered himself for ever infamous by betraying the Duke of Montrose, who had sought and obtained the promise of his protection, to his enemies.

Close by this bridge stands a little highland cottage, of, however, a considerably better order than the common run of such domiciles in this quarter of the world; and bespeaking a condition, as to circumstances, on the part of its occupants, which is by no means general in the Highlands.

"Well, what of this cottage?" says the impatient reader.

"What of it?" say we, with the proud consciousness of having something worth hearing to tell of it. "Why, was it not the birthplace of Donald Gorm?"

"And, pray, who or what was Donald Gorm?"

"We were just going to tell you when you interrupted us; and we will now proceed to the fulfilment of that intention."

Donald Gorm was a rough, rattling, outspoken, hot-headed, and warm-hearted highlander, of about two-and-thirty years of age. Bold as a lion, and strong as a rhinoceros, with great bodily activity, he feared nobody; and having all the irascibility of his race, would fight with anybody at a moment's notice. Possessing naturally a great flow of animal spirits and much ready wit, Donald was the life and soul of every merry-making in which he bore a part. In the dance, his joyous whoop and haloo might be heard a mile off; and the hilarious crack of his finger and thumb, nearly a third of that distance. Donald, in short, was one of those choice spirits that are always ready for anything, and who, by the force of their individual energies, can keep a whole country-side in a stir. As to his occupations, Donald's were various—sometimes farming, (assisting his father, with whom he lived,) sometimes herring fishing, and sometimes taking a turn at harvest work in the Lowlands—by which industry he had scraped a few pounds together; and, being unmarried, with no one to care for but himself, he was thus comparatively independent—a circumstance which kept Donald's head at its highest elevation, and his voice, when he spoke, at the top of its bent.

The tenor of our story requires that we should now advert to another member of Donald's family. This is a brother of the latter's, who bore the euphonious and high-flavoured patronymic of Duncan Dhu M'Tavish Gorm, or, simply, Duncan Gorm, as he was, for shortness, called,

although certainly baptized by the formidable list of names just given.

This Duncan Gorm was a man of totally different character from his brother Donald. He was of a quiet and peaceable disposition and demeanour—steady, sober, and conscientious; qualities which were thought to adapt him well for the line of life in which he was placed. This was as a domestic servant in the family of an extensive highland proprietor, of the name of Grant. In this capacity Duncan had, about a year or so previous to the precise period when our story commences—which, by the way, we beg the reader to observe, is now some ninety years past—gone to the continent, as a personal attendant on the elder son of his master, whose physicians had recommended his going abroad for the benefit of his health.

It was, then, about a year after the departure of Duncan and his master, that Donald's father received a letter from his son, intimating the death of his young master, which had taken place at Madrid, and, what was much more surprising intelligence, that the writer had determined on settling in the city just named, as keeper of a tavern or wine-house, in which calling he said he had no doubt he would do well. And he was not mistaken; in about six months after, his family received another letter from him, informing them that he was succeeding beyond his most sanguine expectations—and hereby hangs our tale.

On Donald these letters of his brother's made a very strong impression; and, finally, had the effect of inducing him to adopt a very strange and very bold resolution. This was neither more nor less than to join his brother in Madrid—a resolution from which it was found impossible to dissuade him, especially after the receipt of Duncan's second letter, giving intimation of his success.

With most confused and utterly inadequate notions, therefore, of either the nature, or distance, or position of

the country to which he was going, Donald made preparations for his journey. But they were merely such preparations as he would have made for a descent on the Lowlands, at harvest time. He put up some night-caps, stockings, and shirts in a bundle, with a quantity of bread and cheese, and a small flask of his native mountain dew. This bundle he proposed to suspend, in the usual way, over his shoulder on the end of a huge oak stick, which he had carefully selected for the purpose. And it was thus prepared—with, however, an extra supply of his earnings in his pocket, of which he had a vague notion he would stand in need—that Donald contemplated commencing his journey to Madrid from the heart of the Highlands of Scotland. In one important particular, however, did Donald's outfit on this occasion, differ from that adopted on ordinary occasions. On the present, he equipped himself in the full costume of his country—kilt, plaid, bonnet and feather, sword, dirk, and pistols; and thus arrayed, his appearance was altogether very striking, as he was both a stout and exceedingly handsome man.

Before starting on his extraordinary expedition, Donald had learned which was the fittest seaport whereat to embark on his progress to Spain; and it was nearly all he had learned, or indeed cared to inquire about, as to the place of his destination. For this port, then, he finally set out; but over his proceedings, for somewhere about three weeks after this, there is a veil which our want of knowledge of facts and circumstances will not enable us to withdraw. Of all subsequent to this, however, we are amply informed; and shall now proceed to give the reader the full benefit of that information.

Heaven knows how Donald had fought his way to Madrid, or what particular route he had taken to attain this consummation; but certain it is, that, about the end of the three weeks mentioned, the identical Donald Gorm

of whom we speak, kilted and hosed as he left Eddernahulish, with a huge stick over his shoulder bearing a bundle suspended on its farthest extremity, was seen, early in the afternoon, approaching the gate of Alcala, one of the principal and most splendid entrances into the Spanish capital. Donald was staring about him, and at everything he saw, with a look of the greatest wonder and amazement; and strange were the impressions that the peculiar dresses of those he met, and the odd appearance of the buildings within his view, made upon his unsophisticated mind and bewildered sensorium.

He, in truth, felt very much as if he had by some accident got into the moon, or some other planet than that of which he was a born inhabitant, and as if the beings around him were human only in form and feature. The perplexity and confusion of his ideas were, indeed, great—so great that he found it impossible to reduce them to such order as to give them one single distinct impression. There were, however, two points in Donald's character, which remained wholly unaffected by the novelty of his position. These were his courage and bold bearing. Not all Spain, nor all that was in Spain, could have deprived Donald of these for a moment. He was amazed, but not in the least awed. He was, in truth, looking rather fiercer than usual, at this particular juncture, in consequence of a certain feeling of irritation, caused by what he deemed the impertinent curiosity of the passers-by, who, no less struck with his strange appearance than he with theirs, were gazing and tittering at him from all sides—treatment this, at which Donald thought fit to take mortal offence. Having arrived, however, at the gate of Alcala, Donald thought it full time to make some inquiries as to where his relative resided. Feeling impressed with the propriety of this step, he made up to a group of idle, equivocal-looking fellows, who, wrapped up in long but sadly

dilapidated cloaks, were lounging about the gate; and, plunging boldly into the middle of them, he delivered himself thus, in his best English:—

"I say, freens, did you'll know, any of you, where my broder stops?"

The men, as might be expected, first stared at the speaker, and then burst out a-laughing in his face. They, of course, could not comprehend a word of what he said; a circumstance on the possibility of which it had never struck Donald to calculate, and to which he did not now advert. Great, therefore, was his wrath, at this, apparently, contemptuous treatment by the Spaniards. His highland blood mounted to his face, and with the same rapidity rose his highland choler. Donald, in truth, already contemplated doing battle in defence of his insulted consequence, and at once hung out his flag of defiance.

"You tam scarecrow-lookin rascals!" he sputtered out, in great fury, at the same time shaking his huge clenched brown fist in the faces of the whole group, their numbers not in the least checking his impetuosity—"You cowartly, starvation-like togs! I've a goot mind to make smashed potatoes o' the whole boilin o' ye. Tam your Spanish noses and whiskers!"

The fierce and determined air of Donald had the effect of instantly restoring the gravity of the Spaniards, who, totally at a loss to comprehend what class of the human species he represented, looked at him with a mingled expression of astonishment and respect. At length, one of their number discharged a volley of his native language at Donald; but it was, apparently, of civil and good-natured import, for it was delivered in a mild tone, and accompanied by a conciliatory smile. On Donald, the language was, of course, utterly lost—he did not comprehend a word of it; but not so the indications of a friendly disposi-

tion to which we have alluded; these he at once appreciated, and they had the effect of allaying his wrath a little, and inducing him to make another attempt at a little civil colloquy.

"Well," said Donald, now somewhat more calmly, "I was shust ask you a ceevil question, an' you laugh in my face, which is not ceevil. In my country we don't do that to anybody, far less a stranger. Noo, may pe, you'll not know my broder, and there's no harm in that—none at all; but you should shust have say so at once, an' there would be no more apout it. Can none of you speak Gaelic?"

To this inquiry, which was understood to be such, there was a general shaking of heads amongst the Spaniards.

"Oich, oich, it must be a tam strange country where there's no Gaelic. But, never mind—you cannot help your misfortunes. I say, lads, will ye teuk a tram. Hooch, hurra! prof, prof! Let's get a dram." And Donald flung up one of his legs hilariously, while he gave utterance to these uncouth expletives, which he did in short joyous shouts. "Where will we go, lads? Did you'll know any decen' public-house, where we'll can depend on a goot tram?"

To this invitation, and to the string of queries by which it was accompanied, Donald got in reply only a repetition of that shake of the head which intimated non-comprehension. But it was an instance of the latter that surprised him more than all the others.

"Well, to be surely," he said, "if a man'll not understand the offer of a tram, he'll understand nothing, and it's no use saying more. Put maybe you'll understand the sign, if not the word." And, saying this, he raised his closed hand to his lips and threw back his head, as if taking off a *caulker* of his own mountain dew; pointing, at the same time, to a house which seemed to him to have

the appearance of one of public entertainment. To Donald's great satisfaction, he found that he had now made himself perfectly intelligible; a fact which he recognised in the smiles and nods of his auditory, and, still more unequivocally, in the general movement which they made after him to the "public-house," to which he immediately directed his steps.

At the head, then, of this troop of tatterdemallions, and walking with as stately a step as a drum-major, Donald may be said to have made his entrance into Madrid; and rather an odd first appearance of that worthy there, it certainly was. On entering the tavern or inn which he had destined for the scene of his hospitalities, he strode in much in the same style that he would have entered a public-house in Lochaber—namely, slapping the first person he met on the shoulder, and shouting some merry greeting or other appropriate to the occasion. This precisely Donald did in the present instance, to the great amazement and alarm of a very pretty Spanish girl, who was performing the duty of ushering in customers, inclusive of that of subsequently supplying their wants. On feeling the enormous paw of Donald on her shoulder, and looking at the strange attire in which he was arrayed, the girl uttered a scream of terror, and fled into the interior of the house. Unaccustomed to have his rude but hearty greetings received in this way, or to find them producing an effect so contrary to that which, in his honest warm-heartedness, he intended them to produce, Donald was rather taken aback by the alarm expressed by the girl; but soon recovering his presence of mind—

"Oich, oich!" he said, laughing, and turning to his ragged crew behind him, "ta lassie's frightened for Shon Heelanman. Puir thing! It's weel seen she's no peen procht up in Lochaber, or maype's no been lang in the way o' keepin a public. It's—

"'Haut awa, bite awa,
Haut awa frae me, Tonal;
What care I for a' your wealth,
An' a' that ye can gie, Tonal?'"

And, chanting this stanza of a well-known Scottish ditty, at the top of his voice, Donald bounced into the first open door he could find, still followed by his tail. These having taken their seats around a table which stood in the centre of the apartment, he next commenced a series of thundering raps on the board with the hilt of his dirk, accompanied by stentorian shouts of, "Hoy, lassie! House, here! Hoy, hoy, hoy!" a summons which was eventually answered by the landlord in person, the girl's report of Donald's appearance and salutation to herself having deterred any other of the household from obeying the call of so wild and noisy a customer.

"Well, honest man," said Donald, on the entrance of his host, "will you pe bringing us two half mutchkins of your pest whisky. Here's some honest lads I want to treat to a tram."

The landlord, as might be expected, stared at this strange guest, in utter unconsciousness of the purport of his demand. Recollecting himself, however, after a moment, his professional politeness returned, and he began bowing and simpering his inability to comprehend what had been addressed to him.

"What for you'll boo, boo, and scrape, scrape there, you tam ass!" exclaimed Donald, furiously. "Co and pring us the whisky. Two half mutchkins, I say."

Again the polite landlord of the Golden Eagle, which was the name of the inn, bowed his non-comprehension of what was said to him.

"Cot's mercy! can you'll not spoke English, either?" shouted Donald, despairingly, on his second rebuff, and at the same time striking the table impatiently with his

clenched fist. "Can you'll spoke Gaelic, then?" he added; and, without waiting for a reply, he repeated his demand in that language. The experiment was unsuccessful. Mine host of the Golden Eagle understood neither Gaelic nor English. Finding this, Donald had once more recourse to the dumb show of raising his hand to his mouth, as if in the act of drinking; and once more he found the sign perfectly intelligible. On its being made, the landlord instantly retired, and in a minute after returned with a couple of bottles in hand, and two very large-sized glasses, which he placed on the table. Eyeing the bottles contemptuously:—"It's no porter; it's whisky I'll order," exclaimed Donald, angrily, conceiving that it was the former beverage that had been brought him. "Porter's drink for hocs, and not for human podies." Finding it wholly impossible, however, to make this sentiment understood, Donald was compelled to content himself with the liquor which had been brought him. Under this conviction, he seized one of the bottles, filled up a glass to the brim, muttering the while "that it was tam white, strange-looking porter," started to his feet, and, holding the glass extended in his hand, shouted the health of his ragged company, in Gaelic, and bolted the contents. But the effect of this proceeding was curious. The moment the liquor, which was some of the common wine of Spain, was over Donald's throat, he stared wildly, as if he had just done some desperate deed—swallowed an adder by mistake, or committed some such awkward oversight. This expression of horror was followed by the most violent sputterings and hideous grimaces, accompanied by a prodigious assemblage of curses of all sorts, in Gaelic and English, and sometimes of an equal proportion of both.

"Oich, oich! poisoned, by Cot!—vinekar, horrid vinekar! Lanlort, I say, what cursed stuffs is this you kive us?" And again Donald sputtered with an energy and perse-

verance that nothing but a sense of the utmost disgust and loathing could have inspired. Both the landlord and Donald's own guests, at once comprehending his feelings regarding the wine, hastened, by every act and sign they could think of, to assure him that he was wrong in entertaining so unfavourable an opinion of its character and qualities. Mine host, filling up a glass, raised it to his mouth, and, sipping a little of the liquor, smacked his lips, in token of high relish of its excellences. He then handed the glass round the company, all of whom tasted and approved, after the same expressive fashion; and thus, without a word being said, a collective opinion, hollow against Donald, was obtained.

"Well, well, trink the apominations, and be curst to you!" said Donald, who perfectly understood that judgment had gone against him, "and much goot may't do you! but mysel would sooner trink the dirty bog water of Sleevrechkin. Oich, oich! the dirts! But I say, lanlort, maype you'll have got some prandies in the house? I can make shift wi' that when there's no whisky to be cot."

Fortunately for Donald, mine host of the Golden Eagle at once understood the word brandy, and, understanding it, lost no time in placing a measure of that liquor before him; and as little time did Donald lose in swallowing an immense bumper of the inspiring alcohol.

"Ay," said Donald, with a look of great satisfaction, on performing this feat, "that's something like a human Christian's trink. No your tam vinekar, as would colic a horse." Saying this, he filled up and discussed another modicum of the brandy; his followers, in the meantime, having done the same duty by the two bottles of wine, which were subsequently replaced by other two, by the order of their hospitable entertainer. On Donald, however, his libations were now beginning to produce, in a very marked manner, their usual effects. He was first getting

into a state of high excitation; thumping the table violently with his fist, and sputtering out furious discharges of Gaelic and English, mingled in one strange and unintelligible mess of words, and seemingly oblivious of the fact that not a syllable of what he said could be comprehended by his auditory. This, then, was a circumstance which did not hinder him from entertaining his friends with a graphic description of Eddernahulish, and a very animated account of a particular deer-chase in which he had once been engaged. In short, in the inspiration of the hour, Donald seemed to have entirely forgotten every circumstance connected with his present position. He appeared to have forgotten that he was in a foreign land; forgotten the purpose that brought him there; forgotten his brother; forgotten those associated with him were Spaniards, not Atholemen; in truth, forgotten everything he should have recollected. In this happy state of obfuscation, Donald continued to roar, to drink, and to talk away precisely as he was wont to do in Rory M'Fadyen's "public" in Kilnichrochokan. From being oratorical, Donald became musical, and insisted on having a song from some of his friends; but failing to make his request intelligible, he volunteered one himself, and immediately struck up, in a strong nasal twang, and with a voice that made the whole house ring:—

"Ta Heelan hills are high, high, high,
An' ta Heelan miles are long;
But, then, my freens, rememper you,
Ta Heelan whisky's strong, strong, strong!
Ta Heelan whisky's strong,

"And who shall care for ta length o' ta mile,
Or who shall care for ta hill,
If he shall have, 'fore he teukit ta way,
In him's check one Heelan shill?
In him's check one Heelan shill?

"An' maype he'll pe teukit twa;
I'll no say is no pe tree;
And what although it should pe four?
Is no pussiness you or me, me, me—
Is no pussiness you or me."

Suiting the action to, at least, the spirit of the song, Donald tossed off another bumper of the alcohol, which had the rather odd effect of recalling him to some sense of his situation, instead of destroying, as might have been expected, any little glimmering of light on that subject which he might have previously possessed. On discussing the last glass of brandy—

"Now, lads," said Donald, "I must pe going. It's gettin late, and I must find oot my brother Tuncan Gorm, as decen' a lad as between this and Eddernahulish." Having said this, and paid his reckoning, Donald began shaking hands with his friends, one after the other, previous to leaving them; but his friends had no intention whatever of parting with him in this way. Donald had incautiously exposed his wealth when settling with the landlord; and of his wealth, as well as his wine, they determined on having a share. The ruffians, in short, having communicated with each other, by nods and winks, resolved to dog him; and, when fitting place and opportunity should present themselves, to rob and murder him. Fortunately for Donald, however, they had not exchanged intelligence so cautiously as to escape his notice altogether. He had seen and taken note of two or three equivocal acts and motions of his friends; but had had sufficient prudence, not only to avoid all remark on them, but to seem as if he had not observed them. Donald, indeed, could not well conceive what these secret signals meant; but he felt convinced that they meant "no goot;" and he therefore determined on keeping a sharp look-out, not only while he was in the presence of his boon companions, but after he should have

left them; for he had a vague notion that they might possibly follow him for some evil purpose.

Under this latter impression—which had occurred to him only at the close of their orgie, no suspicion unfavourable to the characters of his guests having before struck him—Donald, on parting from the latter at the door of the inn in which they had been regaling, might have been heard muttering to himself, after he had got to some little distance:—

"Tam rogues, after all, I believe."

Having thus distinctly expressed his sentiments regarding his late companions, Donald pursued his way, although he was very far from knowing what that way should be. Street after street he traversed, making frequent vain inquiries for his "broder, Tuncan Gorm," until midnight, when he suddenly found himself in a large, open space, intersected by alleys formed by magnificent trees, and adorned by playing fountains of great beauty and elegance. Donald had got into the Prado, or public promenade of Madrid; but of the Prado Donald knew nothing; and much, therefore, did he marvel at what sort of a place he had got into. The fountains, in particular, perplexed and amazed him; and it was while contemplating one of these, with a sort of bewildered curiosity, that he saw a human figure glide from one side to the other of the avenue in which the object of his contemplation was situated, and at the distance of about twenty yards. Donald was startled by the apparition; and, recollecting his former associates, clapped his right hand instinctively on the hilt of his broadsword, and his left on the butt of a pistol—one of those stuck in his belt—and in this attitude awaited the re-appearance of the skulker; but he did not make himself again visible. Donald, however, felt convinced that there was danger at hand, and he determined to keep himself prepared to encounter it.

"Some o' ta vinckar-drinking rascals," muttered Donald. "It was no honest man's drink; nor no goot can come o' a country where they swallow such apominable liquors."

Thus reasoned Donald with himself, as he stood vigilantly scanning the localities around him, to prevent a sudden surprise. While thus engaged, four different persons, all at once, and as if they had acted by concert, started each from behind a tree, and approached Donald from four different points, with the purpose, evidently, of distracting his attention. At once perceiving their intention, and not doubting that their purposes were hostile, the intrepid Celt, to prevent himself being surrounded, hastily retreated to a wall which formed part of the structure of the fountain on which he had been gazing, and, placing his back against it, awaited, with his drawn sword in one hand and a pistol in the other, the approach of his enemies, as he had no doubt they were.

"Well, my friends," said Donald, as they drew near him, and discovered to him four tall fellows, swathed up to the eyes in their cloaks, and each with a drawn sword in his hand, "what you'll want with me?" No answer having been returned to this query, and the fellows continuing to press on, although now more cautiously, as they had perceived that their intended victim was armed, and stood on the defensive: "Py Shoseph!" said Donald, "you had petter keep your distance, lads, or my name's no Tonal Gorm if I don't gif some of you a dish of crowdy."

And, as good as his word, he almost instantly after fired at the foremost of his assailants, and brought him down. This feat performed, instead of waiting for the attack of the other three, he instantly rushed on them sword in hand, and, by the impetuosity of his attack, and fury of his blows, rendered all their skill of fence useless. With his huge weapon and powerful arm, both of which he plied with a rapidity and force which there was no resisting, he broke

through their guards as easily as he would have beat down so many osier wands, and wounded severely at every blow. It was in vain that Donald's assailants kept retiring before him, in the hope of getting him at a disadvantage—of finding an opportunity of having a cut or a thrust at him. No time was allowed them for any such exploit. Donald kept pressing on, and showering his tremendous blows on them so thickly, that not an instant was left them for aggression in turn. They were, besides, rapidly losing relish for the contest, from the ugly blows they were getting, without a possibility of returning them. Finding, at length, that the contest was a perfectly hopeless one, Donald's assailants fairly took to their heels, and ran for it; but there was one of their number who did not run far—a few yards, when he fell down and expired. His hurts had been mortal.

"Oich, oich, lad!" said Donald, peering into the face of the dead man, "you'll no pe shust that very weel, I'm thinkin. The heelan claymore 'll not acree with your Spanish stomach. But it's goot medicine for rogues, for all that." Having thus apostrophized the slain man, Donald sheathed his weapon, muttering as he did so: "Ta cowartly togs can fight no more's a turkey hens."

And, cocking his bonnet proudly, he commenced the task of finding his way back to the city; a task which, after a good many unnecessary, but, from his ignorance of the localities, unavoidable deviations, he at length accomplished.

Donald's most anxious desire now was to find a "public" in which to quarter for the night; but, the hour being late, this was no easy matter. Every door was shut, and the streets lonely and deserted. At length, however, our hero stumbled on what appeared to him to be something of the kind he wanted, although he could have wished it to have been on a fully smaller and humbler scale. This was a large hotel, in which every

window was blazing with light, and the rooms were filled with mirthful music. Donald's first impression was that it was a penny wedding upon a great scale. It was, in truth, a masquerade; and as the brandy which he had drunk in the earlier part of the evening was still in his head, he proposed to himself taking a very active part in the proceedings. On entering the hotel, however, which he did boldly, he was rather surprised at the splendours of various kinds which greeted his eyes—marble stairs, gorgeous lamps, gilt cornices, &c., &c., and sundry other indications of grandeur which he had never seen equalled even in Tain or Dingwall, to say nothing of his native parish of Macharuarich, and he had been in his time in every public-house of any repute in all of them. These circumstances did not disabuse Donald of his original idea of its being a penny-wedding. He only thought that they conducted these things in greater style in Spain than in Scotland, and with this solution of the difficulty, suggested by the said splendours, Donald mounted the broad marble staircase, and stalked into the midst of a large apartment filled with dancers. The variety and elegance of the dresses of these last again staggered Donald's belief in the nature of the merry-making, and made him doubt whether he had conjectured aright. These doubts, however, did not for an instant shake his determination to have a share in the fun. It was a joyous dancing party, and that was quite enough for him. In the meantime he contented himself with staring at the strange but splendid figures by whom he was surrounded, and who were, in various corners of the apartment, gliding through the "mazy dance." But if Donald's surprise was great at the costumes which he was now so intently marking, those who displayed them were no less surprised at that which he exhibited. Donald's strange, but striking attire, in truth, had attracted all eyes; and much did those

who beheld it wonder in all the earth to what country it belonged. But simple wonder and admiration were not the only sensations which Donald's garb produced on the masquers. His kilt had other effects. It drove half the ladies screaming out of the apartment, to its wearer's great surprise and no small displeasure. The guise which Donald wore, however, and which all believed to have been donned for the occasion, was, on the whole, much approved of, and the wearer, in more than one instance, complimented for his taste in having selected so novel and striking a garb. But even his warmest applauders objected to the scantiness of the kilt, and hinted that, for decorum's sake, this part of his dress should have been carried down to his heels. This improvement on his kilt was suggested, in the most polite terms, to Donald himself, by a Spanish gentleman, who spoke a little English, and who had ascertained that our hero was a native of Great Britain, and whom he believed to be a man of note. To this suggestion Donald made no other reply than by a look of the utmost indignation and contempt. The Spanish gentleman, whose name was Don Sebastanio, seeing that his remark had given offence, hastened to apologise for the liberty he had taken—assuring Donald that he meant nothing disrespectful or insulting. This apology was just made in time, as the irritable Celt had begun to entertain the idea of challenging the Spaniard to mortal combat. As it was, however, his good nature at once gave way to the pacific overture that was made him. Seizing the apologist by the hand, with a gripe that produced some dismal contortions of countenance on the part of him on whom it was inflicted—

"Is no harm done at all, my friend. You'll not know no petter, having never peen, I dare say, in our country, or seen a heelanman pefore."

The Spaniard declared he never had had either of these

happinesses, and concluded by inviting Donald to an adjoining apartment to have some refreshment—an invitation which Donald at once obeyed.

"Now, my good sir," said his companion, on their entering a sort of refectory where were a variety of tables spread with abundance of the good things of this life and of Madrid, "what shall you prefer?"

"Herself's not fery hungry, but a little thirsty," said Donald, flinging himself down on a seat in a free-and-easy way, with his legs astride, so as to allow free suspension to his huge goat-skin purse, and doffing his bonnet, and wiping the perspiration from his forehead—"Herself's no fery hungry, but a little thirsty; and she'll teukit, if you please, a fery small drop of whisky and water."

The Spaniard was nonplussed. He had never even heard of whisky in his life, and was therefore greatly at a loss to understand what sort of liquor his friend meant. Donald, perceiving his difficulty, and guessing that it was of the same nature with the one which he had already experienced, hastily transmuted his demand for whisky into one for brandy, which was immediately supplied him, when Donald, pouring into a rummer a quantity equal to at least six glasses, filled up with water, and drank the whole off, to the inexpressible amazement of his companion, who, however, although he looked unutterable things at the enormous draught, was much too polite to say anything.

Thus primed a second time, Donald, seeing his new friend engaged with some ladies who had unexpectedly joined him, returned alone to the dancing apartment, which he entered with a whoop of encouragement to the performers that startled every one present, and for an instant arrested the motions of the dancers, who could not comprehend the meaning of his uncouth cries. Regardless of this effect of his interference in the proceedings of the evening, Donald, with a countenance

beaming with hilarity, and eyes sparkling with wild and reckless glee, took up a conspicuous position in the room, and from thence commenced edifying the dancers by a series of short abrupt shouts or yells, accompanied by a vigorous clapping of his hands, at once to intimate his satisfaction with the performances, and to encourage the performers themselves to further exertions. Getting gradually, however, too much into the spirit of the thing to be content with being merely an onlooker, Donald all at once capered into the middle of the floor, snapping his fingers and thumbs, and calling out to the musicians to strike up "Caber Feigh;" and, without waiting to hear whether his call was obeyed, he commenced a vigorous exhibition of the highland fling, to the great amazement of the bystanders, who, instantly abandoning their own pursuits, crowded around him to witness this to them most extraordinary performance. Thus occupied, and thus situated—the centre of a "glittering ring"—Donald continued to execute with unabated energy the various strongly-marked movements of his national dance, amidst the loud applauses of the surrounding spectators. On concluding—

"Oich, oich!" exclaimed Donald, out of breath with his exertion, and looking laughingly round on the circle of bystanders. "Did ever I think to dance ta heelan fling in Madrid! Och, no, no! Never, by Shoseph! But, I dare say, it'll pe the first time that it was ever danced here."

From this moment Donald became a universal favourite in the room, and the established lion of the night. Wherever he went he was surrounded with an admiring group, and was overloaded with civilities of all kinds, including frequent offers of refreshment; so that he speedily found himself in most excellent quarters. There was, however, one drawback in his happiness. He could get no share in

the dancing excepting what he chose to perform solus, as there was nothing in that way to be seen in the room in the shape of a reel, nor was there a single tune played of which he could make either head or tail—nothing but "your foreign trash, with neither spunk nor music in them." Determined, however, since his highland fling had been so much approved of, to give a specimen of the highland reel, if he could possibly make it out, Donald, as a first step, looked around him for a partner; and seeing a very handsome girl seated in one of the corners of the apartment, and apparently disengaged, he made up to her, and, making one of his best bows, solicited the honour of her joining him in a reel. Without understanding the language in which she was addressed, but guessing that it conveyed an invitation to the floor, the young lady at once arose and curtsied an acquiescence, when Donald, taking her gallantly by the hand, led her up to the front of the orchestra, in order that he might bespeak the appropriate music for the particular species of dance he contemplated. On approaching sufficiently near to the musicians—

"Fittlers," he shouted, at the top of his voice, "I say, can you'll kive us 'Rothiemurchus' Rant,' or the 'Trucken Wives of Fochabers?'"

Then turning to his partner, and flinging his arms about her neck in an ecstacy of Highland excitation, capering at the same time hilariously in anticipation of the coming strain—

"Them's the tunes, my lass, for putting mettle in your heels."

A scream from the lady with whom Donald was using these unwarrantable personal liberties, and a violent attempt on her part to escape from them, suddenly arrested Donald's hilarity, and excited his utmost surprise In the next instant he was surrounded by at least half-a-

dozen angry cavaliers, amongst whom there was a brandishing of swords and much violent denunciation, all directed against Donald, and excited by his unmannerly rudeness to a lady. It was some seconds before Donald could comprehend the meaning of all this wrath, or believe that he was at once the cause and the object of it. But on this becoming plain—

"Well, shentlemen," he said, "I did not mean anything wrong. No offence at all to the girl. It was just the fashion of my country; and I'm sorry for it."

To this apology of Donald's, of which, of course, not a word was understood, the only reply was a more fierce flourishing of brands, and a greater volubility and vehemence of abuse; the effect of which was at once to arouse Donald's choler, and to urge him headlong on extremities.

"Well, well," he said, "if you'll not have satisfaction any other way than py the sword, py the sword you shall have it."

And instantly drawing, he stood ready to encounter at once the whole host of his enemies. What might have been the result of so unequal a contest, had it taken place, we cannot tell—and this simply because no encounter did take place. At the moment that Donald was awaiting the onset of the foe—a proceeding, by the way, which they were now marvellously slow in adopting, notwithstanding the fury with which they had opened the assault, a party of the king's guard, with fixed bayonets, rushed into the apartment, and bore Donald forcibly out into the street, where they left him, with angry signs that if he attempted to return, he would meet with still worse treatment. Donald had prudence enough to perceive that any attempt to resent the insult that had been offered him—seeing that it was perpetrated by a dozen men armed with musket and bayonet—would be madness, and therefore contented

himself with muttering in Gaelic some expressions of high indignation and contempt. Having delivered himself to this effect, he proudly adjusted his plaid, and stalked majestically away.

It was now so far advanced in the morning that Donald abandoned all idea of seeking for a bed, and resolved on prosecuting an assiduous search for his brother. This he accordingly commenced, and numerous were the calls at shops, and frequent the inquiries he made for Tuncan Gorm; but unavailing were they all. No one understood a word of what he addressed to them; and thus, of course, no one could give him the information he desired. It was in vain, too, that Donald carefully scanned every sign that he passed, to see that it did not bear the anxiously looked for name. On none of them did it appear. They were all, as Donald himself said, Fouros, and Beuros, and Lebranos, and Dranos, and other outlandish and unchristian-like names. Not a heeland or lowland shopkeeper amongst them. No such a decent and civilized name to be met with as Gorm, or Brolachan, or M'Fadyen, or Macharuarich, or M'Cuallisky.

Tired and disappointed, Donald, after wandering up and down the streets for several hours, bethought him of adjourning to a tavern to have something to eat, and probably something to drink also. Seeing such a house as he wanted, he entered, and desired the landlord to furnish him with some dinner. In a few seconds two dishes were placed before him; but what these dishes were, Donald could not at all make out. They resembled nothing in the edible way he had ever seen before, and the flavour was most alarming. Nevertheless, being pretty sharp-set, he resolved to try them, and for this purpose drew one of the dishes towards him, when, having peered as curiously and cautiously into it for a few seconds as if he feared it would leap up in his face and bite him, and curling his nose the

while into strong disapprobation of its odour, he lifted several spoonfuls of the black greasy mess on his plate. At this point Donald found his courage failing him; but, as his host stood behind his chair and was witness to all his proceedings, he did not like either to express the excessive disgust he was beginning to feel, nor to refuse tasting of what was set before him. Mustering all his remaining courage, therefore, he plunged his spoon with desperate violence into the nauseous mess, which seemed to Donald to be some villanous compound of garlic, rancid oil, and dough; and raising it to his lips, shut his eyes, and boldly thrust it into his mouth. Donald's resolution, however, could carry him no farther. To swallow it he found utterly impossible, now that the horrors of both taste and smell were full upon him. In this predicament, Donald had no other way for it but to give back what he had taken; and this course he instantly followed, adding a large interest, and exclaiming—

"My Cot! what sort of a country is this? Your drinks is poison, and your meats is poison, and everything is apominations apout you. Oich, oich! I wish to Cot I was back to Eddernahulish again; for I'll pe either poisoned or murdered amongst you if I remain much longer here. That's peyond all doubt."

And having thus expressed himself, Donald started to his feet, and was about to leave the house without any farther ceremony, when the landlord adroitly planted himself between him and the door, and demanded the reckoning. Donald did not know precisely what was asked of him, but he guessed that it was a demand for payment, and this demand he was determined to resist, on the ground that what he could not eat he ought not to be called on to pay for. Full of this resolution, and having no doubt that he was right in his conjecture as to the landlord's purpose in preventing his exit—

"Pay for ta apominations!" said Donald, wrathfully. "Pay for ta poison! It's myself will see you at Jericho first. Not a farthing, not one tam farthing, will I pay you for ta trash. So stand out of the way, my friend, pefore worse comes of it."

Saying this, Donald advanced to the door, and seizing its guardian by the breast, laid him gently on his back on the floor, and stepping over his prostrate body, walked deliberately out of the house, without further interruption, mine host not thinking it advisable to excite further the choler of so dangerous a customer, and one who had just given him so satisfactory a specimen of his personal prowess. Another day had now nearly passed away, and Donald was still as far, to all appearance, from finding the object of his search as ever he had been. He was, moreover, now both hungry and thirsty; but these were evils which he soon after succeeded in obviating for the time, by a more successful foray than the last. Going into another house of entertainment, he contrived to make a demand for bread and cheese intelligible—articles which he had specially condescended on, that there might be "no mistake;" and with these and a pretty capacious measure of brandy, he managed to effect a very tolerable passover. Before leaving this house, Donald made once more the already oft but vainly-repeated inquiry, whether he knew (he was addressing his landlord) where one Duncan Gorm stopped. It did not now surprise Donald to find that his inquiry was not understood; but it did both surprise and delight him when his host, who had abruptly left the room for an instant, returned with a person who spoke very tolerable English. This man was a muleteer, and had resided for some years in London, in the service of the Spanish ambassador. His name—a most convenient one for Donald to pronounce—was Mendoza Ambrosius. On being introduced to this personage, Donald expressed the utmost

delight at finding in him one who spoke a Christian language, as he called it; and, in the joy of his heart with his good fortune, ordered in a jorum of brandy for the entertainment of himself and Mr. Ambrosius. The liquor being brought, and several horns of it discussed, Donald and his new friend got as thick as "ben' leather." And on this happy understanding being established, the former began to detail, at all the length it would admit of, the purpose of his visit to Madrid, and the occurrences that had befallen him since his arrival; prefacing these particulars with a sketch of his history, and some account of the place of his nativity; and concluding the whole by asking his companion if he could in any way assist him to find his brother, Duncan Gorm.

The muleteer replied, in the best English he could command, that he did not know the particular person inquired after, but that he knew the residences of two or three natives of Britain, some of whom, he thought it probable, might be acquainted with his brother; and that he would have much pleasure in conducting him to these persons, for the purpose of ascertaining this. Donald thanked his friend for his civility; and, in a short time thereafter, the brandy having been finished in the interim, the two set out together on their expedition of inquiry. It was a clear, moonlight night; but, although it was so, and the hour what would be considered in this country early, the streets were nearly deserted, and as lonely and quiet as if Madrid were a city of the dead. This stillness had the effect of making the smallest sound audible even at a great distance, and to this stillness it was owing that Donald and his friend suddenly heard, soon after they had set out, the clashing of swords, intermingled with occasional shouts, at a remote part of the street they were traversing.

"What's tat?" exclaimed Donald, stopping abruptly,

and cocking his ears at the well-known sound of clashing steel. His companion, accustomed to such occurrences, replied, with an air of indifference, that it was merely some street brawl.

"It'll pe these tam vinekar drinkers again," said Donald, with a lively recollection of the assault that had been made upon himself; "maybe some poor shentleman's in distress. Let us go and see, my tear sir." To this proposal, the muleteer, with a proper sense of the folly of throwing himself in the way of mischief unnecessarily, would at first by no means accede; but, on being urged by Donald, agreed to move on a little with him towards the scene of conflict. This proceeding soon brought them near enough to the combatants to perceive that Donald's random conjecture had not been far wrong, by discovering to them one person, who, with his back to the wall, was bravely defending himself against no fewer than four assailants, all being armed with swords.

"Did not I tell you so!" exclaimed Donald, in great excitation, on seeing how matters stood. "Noo, Maister Tozy-Brozey, shoulder to shoulder, my tear, and we'll assist this poor shentleman." Saying this, Donald drew his claymore, and rushed headlong on to the rescue, calling on Tozy Brozy to follow him; but Tozy Brozy's feelings and impulses carried him in a totally different direction. Fearing that his friend's interference in the squabble might have the effect of directing some of the blows his way, he fairly took to his heels, leaving Donald to do by himself what to himself seemed needful in the case. In the meantime, too much engrossed by the duty before him to mind much whether his friend followed him or not, Donald struck boldly in, in aid of the "shentleman in distress," exclaiming, as he did so—

"Fair play, my tears! Fair play's a shewel everywhere, and I suppose here too." And, saying this, with one

thundering blow that fairly split the skull of the unfortunate wight on whom it fell in twain, Donald lessened the number of the combatants by one. The person to whose aid he had thus so unexpectedly and opportunely come, seeing what an effectual ally he had got, gave a shout of triumphant joy, and, although much exhausted by the violence and length of his exertions in defending himself, instantly became the assailant in his turn. Inspired with new life and vigour, he pressed on his enemies with a fury that compelled them to give way; and, being splendidly seconded by Donald, whose tremendous blows were falling with powerful effect on those against whom they were directed, the result was, in a few seconds, the flight of the enemy; who, in rapid succession, one after the other, took to their heels, although not without carrying along with them several authentic certificates of the efficiency of Donald's claymore.

On the retreat of the bravos—for such they were—the person whom Donald had so efficiently served in his hour of need, flew towards him, and, taking him in his arms, poured out a torrent of thanks for the prompt and gallant aid he had afforded him. But, as these thanks were expressed in Spanish, they were lost on him to whom they were addressed. Not so, however, the indications of gratitude evinced in the acts by which they were accompanied. These Donald perfectly understood, and replied to them as if their sense had been conveyed to him in a language which he comprehended.

"No thanks at all, my tear sir. A Heelantman will always assist a freend where a few plows will do him goot. You would shust do the same to me, I'm sure. But," added Donald, as he sheathed his most serviceable weapon, "this is the tam place for fechtin' I have ever seen. I thocht our own Heelants pad enough, but this is ten times worse, py Shoseph! I have no peen more than four-and-

twenty hours in Ma-a-treed, and I'll have peen in tree fecht already."

More of this speech was understood by the person to whom it was addressed, than might have been expected under all these circumstances. This person was a Spanish gentleman of rank and great wealth, of the name of Don Antonio Nunnez, whose acquirements included a very competent knowledge of the English language, which, although he spoke it but indifferently, he understood very well. Yet it certainly did require all his knowledge of it, to recognise it in the shape in which Donald presented it to him. This, however, to a certain extent, he did, and, in English, now repeated his sense of the important obligation Donald had conferred on him. But it was not to words alone that the grateful and generous Spaniard meant to confine his acknowledgments of the service that had been rendered him. Having ascertained that Donald was a perfect stranger in the city, he insisted on his going home with him, and remaining with him during his stay in Madrid, and further requesting that he would seek at his hands, and no other's, any service or obligation, of whatever nature it might be, of which he should stand in need during his stay.

To these generous proffers, Donald replied, that the greatest service that could be done him was to inform him where he could find his brother, Duncan Gorm. Don Antonio first expressed surprise to learn that Donald had a brother in Madrid, and then his sorrow that he did not know, nor had ever heard of such a person.

"He'll keep a public," said Donald.

"What is that, my friend?" inquired Don Antonio.

"Sell a shill, to be sure—I'll thocht everybody know that," said Donald, a good deal surprised at the other's ignorance.

"Shill? shill?" repeated the Spaniard—"and pray, my friend, what is a shill?"

"Cot pless me! don't you'll know what a shill is?" rejoined Donald, with increased amazement. "If you'll come with me to Eddernahulish, I'll show you what a shill is, and help you to drink it too."

"Well, well, my friend," said Don Antonio. "I'll get an explanation of what a 'shill' is from you afterwards; but, in the meantime, you'll come with me, if you please, as I am anxious to introduce you to some friends at home!"

Saying this, he took Donald's arm, in order to act as his conductor, and, after leading him through two or three streets, brought him to the door of a very large and handsome house. Don Antonio having knocked at this door, it was immediately opened by a servant in splendid livery, who, on recognising his master—for such was Donald's friend—instantly stepped aside, and respectfully admitted the pair. In the vestibule, or passage, which was exceedingly magnificent, were a number of other serving men in rich liveries, who drew themselves up on either side, in order to allow their master and his friend to pass; and much did they marvel at the strange garb in which that friend appeared. Don Antonio now conducted Donald up the broad marbled staircase, splendidly illuminated with a variety of elegant lamps, in which the vestibule terminated; and, on reaching the top of the first flight, ushered him into a large and gorgeously-furnished apartment, in which were two ladies dressed in deep mourning. To these ladies, one of whom was the mother, the other the sister of Don Antonio, the latter introduced his amazed and awe-stricken companion, as a person to whom he was indebted for his life. He then explained to his relations what had occurred, and did not fail to give Donald's promptitude and courage a due share of his laudations. With a gratitude not less earnest than his own had been, the mother and sister of Don Antonio took Donald by the

hand; the one taking the right, and the other the left, and, looking in his face, with an expression of the utmost kindness, thanked him for the great obligation he had conferred on them. These thanks were expressed in Spanish; but, on Don Antonio's mentioning that Donald was a native of Britain, and that he did not, as he rather thought, understand the Spanish language, his sister, a beautiful girl of one or two-and-twenty, repeated them, in somewhat minced, but perfectly intelligible English. Great as Donald's perturbation was at finding himself so suddenly and unexpectedly placed in a situation so much at variance with anything he had been accustomed to, it did not prevent him marking, in a very special manner, the dark sparkling eyes and rich sable tresses of Donna Nunnez, the name of Don Antonio's sister. Nor, we must add, did the former look with utter indifference on the manly form, so advantageously set off as it was by his native dress, of Donald Gorm. But of this anon. In a short time after, a supper, corresponding in elegance and splendour to all the other elegances and splendours of this lordly mansion, was served up; and, on its conclusion, Donald was conducted, by Don Antonio himself, to a sleeping apartment, furnished with the same magnificence that prevailed throughout the whole house. Having ushered him into his apartment, Donald's host bade him a kind good-night, and left him to his repose.

What Donald's feelings were on finding himself thus so superbly quartered, now that he had time to think on the subject, and could do so unrestrained by the presence of any one, we do not precisely know; but, if one might have judged by the under-breath exclamations in which he indulged, and by the looks of amazement and inquiry which he cast around him, from time to time, on the splendours by which he was surrounded, especially on the gorgeous bed, with its gilt canopy and curtains of crimson

silk, which was destined for his night's resting-place, these feelings would appear to have been, after all, fully more perplexing than pleasing. It was, in truth, just too much of a good thing; and Donald felt it to be so. But still the whole had a smack of good fortune about it that was very far from being disagreeable, and that certainly had the effect of reconciling Donald to the little discordance between former habits and present circumstances, which his position for the time excited.

While at breakfast on the following morning with Don Antonio and his mother and sister, the first asked Donald if he had any particular ties in his own country that would imperatively demand his return home; and on Donald's replying that there were none, Don Antonio immediately inquired whether he would accept a commission in the King of Spain's body-guards:—"Because," said he, "if you will, I have, I believe, influence enough to procure it for you."

Donald said he had no objection in the world to try it for a year or two, at any rate—only he would like to consult his "broder Tuncan" first.

"True, true," said Don Antonio; "I promised to assist you in finding out your relative—and I shall do so."

As good as his word in this particular, and a great deal better in many others in which Donald was interested, Don Antonio instantly set an inquiry on foot, which, in less than two hours, brought the brothers together. The sequel of our story, although containing the very essence of Donald's good fortune, is soon told. His brother, highly approving of his accepting the commission offered to him, Don Antonio lost no time in procuring him that appointment; and in less than three weeks from his arrival in Madrid, Donald Gorm figured as a captain in the King of Spain's body-guards, in which service he ultimately attained the rank of colonel, together with a title of

honour, which enabled him to ask, without fear of giving offence, and to obtain, the hand of Donna Nunnez, with a dowry second to that of no fair damsel in Spain. Donald never again returned to Eddernahulish, but continued in the country of his adoption till his death; and in that country some of his descendants to this hour bear amongst the proudest names of which it can boast.

THE SURGEON'S TALES.

THE CURED INGRATE.

EVERY person who has studied, even in the most cursory manner, the checkered page of human life, must have observed that there are in continual operation through mankind some great secret moral agents, the powers of which are exerted within the heart, and beyond the reach of the consciousness or observation of the individual himself who is subject to their influence. There is a steadfastness of virtue in some high-minded men, which enables them to resist the insidious temptations of the bad demon; there is also a stern stability of vice often found in the unfortunate outlaw, which disregards, for a time, the voice of conscience, and spurns the whispered wooing of the good principle, "charm it never so wisely;" yet the real confessions of the hearts of those individuals would show traces enough of the agency of the unseen power to prove their want of title to an exception from the general rule which includes all the sons of Adam. We find, also, that extraordinary moral effects are often produced, in a dark and mysterious manner, from physical causes: every medical man has the power of recording, if he has had the faculty of observing, changes in the minds, principles, and feelings of patients who have come through the fiery ordeal of a terrible disease, altogether unaccountable on any rules of philosophy yet discovered.

Not many years ago, a well-dressed young woman called one evening upon me, and stated that her lady, whose

name, she said, would be communicated by herself, had been ill for some days, and wished me to visit her privately. I asked her when she required my attendance; and got for answer, that she, the messenger, would conduct me to the residence of the patient, if it was convenient for me to go at that time. I was disengaged, and agreed to accompany the young woman as soon as I had given directions to my assistant regarding the preparation of some medicines which required the application of chemical rules. To be ingenuous, I was a little curious to know the secret of this private call; for that there was a secret about it was plain, from the words, and especially the manner, of the young woman, who spoke mysteriously, and did not seem to wish any questions put to her on the subject of her mission. The night was dark, but the considerate messenger had provided a lantern; and, to anticipate my scruples, she said that the distance we had to go would not render it necessary for me to take my carriage—a five-minutes' walk being sufficient to take us to our destination.

Resigning myself to the guidance of my conductress, I requested her to lead the way, and we proceeded along two neighbouring streets of considerable length, and then turned up to —— Square—a place where the rich and fashionable part of the inhabitants of the town have their residences. At the mouth of a coach entry, which ran along the gable of a large house, and apparently led to the back offices connected with the residence, the young woman stopped, and whispered to me to take care of my feet, as she was to use the liberty of leading me along a meuse lane to a back entrance, through which I was to be conducted into the chamber of the sick lady. I obeyed her directions; and, keeping close behind her, was led along the lane, and through several turns and windings which I feared I might not again be able to trace without a guide, until we came to a back door, when the young

woman—begging my pardon for her forwardness—took hold of my hand, and led me along a dark passage, then up a stair, then along another passage, which was lighted by some wax tapers placed in recesses in the wall; at the end of which, she softly opened a door, and ushered me into a very large bedroom, the magnificence of which was only partly revealed to me by a small lamp filled with aromatic oil, whose fragrance filled the apartment. The young woman walked quickly forward to a bed, hung with light green silk damask curtains fringed with yellow, and luxuriously ornamented with a superfluity of gilding; and, drawing aside the curtains, she whispered a few words into the ear of some one lying there, apparently in distress; then hurried out of the room, leaving me standing on the floor, without introduction or explanation.

The novelty of my position deprived me for a moment of my self-possession, and I stood stationary in the middle of the room, deliberating upon whether I should call back my conductress, and ask from her some explanation, or proceed forward to the couch, where, no doubt, my services were required; but my hesitation was soon resolved, by the extraordinary appearance of an Indian-coloured female countenance, much emaciated, and lighted up with two bright orbs, occupying the interstice between the curtains, and beckoning on me, apparently with a painful effort, forward. I obeyed, and, throwing open the large folds of damask, had as full a view of my extraordinary patient as the light that emanated from the perfumed lamp, and shone feebly on her dark countenance, would permit. She beckoned to me to take a chair, which stood by the side of the bed; and, having complied with her mute request, I begged to know what was the complaint under which she laboured, that I might endeavour to yield her such relief as was in the power of our professional art. I thus limited my question to the nature of her disease, in the expectation

that she herself would clear up the mystery which hung around the manner in which I was called, and introduced to so extraordinary a scene as that which was now before me. Her great weakness seemed to require some composure, and a collecting of her scattered and reduced energies, before she could answer my simple question. I now observed more perfectly than I had yet done the character and style of the room into which I had been introduced—its furniture, ornaments, and luxuries; and, above all, the extraordinary, foreign-looking invalid who seemed to be the mistress of so much grandeur. Though a bedroom, the apartment seemed to have had lavished upon its fitting-up as much money as is often expended on a lord's drawing-room—the bed itself, the wardrobes, pier-glasses, toilets, and dressing-cases, being of the most elaborate workmanship and costly character—the pictures numerous, and magnificently framed; while on all sides were to be seen foreign ornaments, chiefly Chinese and Indian, of brilliant appearance, and devoted to purposes and uses of refined luxury of which I could form no adequate conception. On a small table, near the bed, there was a multiplicity of boxes, vials, trinkets, and bijouterie of all kinds; and fragrant mixtures, intended to perfume the apartment, were exposed in various quarters, and even scattered exuberantly on spread covers of satin, with a view to their yielding their sweets more freely, and filling all the corners of the room. In full contrast with all this array of grandeur and luxury, lay the strange-looking individual already mentioned, on the gorgeous bed. She was apparently an East Indian; and, though possessed of comely features, she was even darker than the fair Hindoos we often see in this country. The sickness under which she laboured, and which appeared to be very severe, had rendered her thin and cadaverous-looking—making the balls of her brilliant eyes assume the appearance of being protruded,

and imparting to all her features a sharp, prominent aspect, the very reverse of the natural Indian type; yet, true to her sex and the manners of her country, she was splendidly decorated, even in this state of dishabille and distress; the coverlet being of rich Indian manufacture, and resplendent with the dyes of the East—her gown and cap decorated with costly needlework—her fingers covered with a profusion of rings, while a cambric handkerchief, richly embroidered, in her right hand, had partly enveloped in its folds a large golden vinegarette, set profusely with glittering gems.

The rapid survey which enabled me to gather this general estimate of what was presented to me, was nearly completed before the invalid had collected strength enough to answer my question; and she was just beginning to speak—having as yet pronounced only a few inarticulate syllables—when she was interrupted by the entrance of the same young woman who had acted as my conductress, and who now exhibited a manner the very opposite of the soft, quiet, slipping nature of her former carriage. The suddenness, and even impetuosity of her entry, was inconsistent with the character of nurse to a lady in so distressed a condition as that of her apparent mistress; but her subsequent conduct was much more incomprehensible and extraordinary; for, without speaking and without stopping, she rushed forward, and, taking me by the arm, hurried me away through the door by which I had entered, along the lighted passage, down the stair, and never stopped until she landed me on the threshold of the back-door by which I entered the house. At this time I heard the bell of, as I thought, the fore or street door of the house ringing violently; and my conductress, without saying a word, ran away as fast as the darkness would permit, leaving me, perplexed and confounded at what I had seen and heard, to find my way home in the best way I could.

In my professional capacity I had not been accustomed to any mysterious or secret practice of our art, which, being exercised ostensibly and in reality for the benefit of mankind, requires no cloak to cover its operations; and, though I was curious to know the secret of such incomprehensible proceedings, I felt no admiration of, or relish for adventures so unsuited to the life and manners of a sober, practical man. One thing, however, was clear, and seemed sufficient to reconcile my practical, every-day notions of life with this mysterious negotiation, and even to solve the doubt I entertained whether I should again trust myself as a party to the devices of secrecy—and that was, that the individual I had been thus called to see professionally was in such a condition of body as required urgently the administrations of a medical practitioner. On the following day, I resolved upon making some inquiries, with a view to ascertain who and what the individual was that occupied the house to which I had been introduced, and which, upon a survey in daylight, I could have no difficulty in tracing; but I happened to be too much occupied to be able to put my purpose into execution; and was thus obliged to remain, during the day, in a state of suspense and ignorance of the secret involved in my previous night's professional adventure. In the evening, however, and about the same hour at which the messenger called for me on the previous oocasion, the same individual waited on me, with an apology for the apparently unceremonious treatment I had received, and which, she said, would be explained to my satisfaction; and a renewed request that I would again accompany her to the same house, and on the same errand. I told the messenger that I bore no great love to these secret adventures, but that I would consent, on this occasion, to make a sacrifice of my principles and feelings to the hope of being able to be of some use, in a professional way, to the distressed lady I had seen

on the previous occasion, whose situation, so far as I could judge from appearances, was not far removed from the extremity of danger. I again, accordingly, committed myself to the guidance of the young woman; and, after a repetition of the windings and evolutions of the previous visit, soon found myself again seated in the chair that stood by the gorgeous bed of the strange invalid. Everything seemed to be in the same situation as before: the lamp gave out its weak light, the perfumes exhaled their sweets, and the distressed lady exhibited the same strange contrast between her reduced sickly condition and the superb finery of her dishabille.

I had not been long seated, when she struggled to inform me, in a very weak voice, that she was much beholden to me for my attention, and grieved for the unceremonious treatment I had received on my last visit. I replied, that I laid my account with much greater personal inconvenience, in the pursuit of my profession, than any to which she had subjected or could subject me—all such considerations being, in my apprehension, of small importance in comparison with the good we had often the power of administering to individuals in distress; and begged to know the nature of the complaint under which she too evidently laboured, that I might endeavour to ameliorate her sufferings, and restore her to that health without which the riches she apparently was mistress of, could be of small avail in rendering her happy. She appeared grateful for the sentiments I expressed; and proceeded to tell me, still with the same struggling difficulty of utterance, arising from her extreme weakness, that she was the wife of Colonel P——, the proprietor of the mansion into which I had been thus secretly introduced, for reasons she would explain in the course of her narrative. She had been married to her husband, she proceeded, in the East Indies, of which country she was a native; and, having succeeded

to a large fortune on the death of her father, had given it all freely without bond, contract, or settlement, to her husband, whom she loved, honoured, and worshipped, beyond all earthly beings, and with an ardour which had never abated from the first moment she had become his wife. Nor was the affection limited to one side of the house; for she was more than satisfied that her lord and master—grateful, no doubt, for the rank, honour, riches, and independence to which she had raised him—loved her with an affection at least equal to her own. But all these advantages (and she sighed deeply as she proceeded) were of little consequence to the production of happiness, if the greatest of all blessings, health, were denied to the possessor; and that too she had enjoyed, uninterruptedly, until about a month previously, when she was seized with an illness, the nature of which she could not comprehend; and which, notwithstanding all the anxious efforts of her husband, had continued unabated to that hour.

She paused, and seemed much exhausted by the struggle she made to let me thus far into her history. The concluding part of her statement, combined with the still unexplained secrecy of my call, surprised me, and defied my powers of penetration. This lady had been dangerously ill for a month, during all which time no medical man had been called to her aid; and even now, when her body was attenuated, and her strength exhausted to the uttermost, professional assistance had been introduced into the house by stealth, as if it were against the laws to ameliorate human sufferings by curing diseases. This apparent anomaly in human conduct struck me so forcibly that I could not refrain from asking the patient, even before she recovered strength enough to answer me, what was her or her husband's reason for not calling assistance; and why that assistance was at last requested under the cloud of secrecy and apprehension,

"That I intended to explain to you," she said, after a pause. "When I felt myself ill (and my complaint commenced by excruciating pains in my stomach, accompanied with vomiting,) I told my husband that I feared it would be necessary to call a doctor; but, ah, sir! the very thought of the necessity of medical aid to the object of so much love and tenderness, put him almost frantic. He confessed that it was a weakness; but declared his inability to conquer it. Yet, alas! his unremitting kindness has not diminished my disease. Though I have taken everything his solicitude has suggested and offered to me, my pains still continue, my appetite is entirely gone, and the weakness of my body has approached that of the helpless infant. Three days ago I thought I would have breathed my last; and parting thoughts of my native country, and the dear friends I left there to follow the fortunes of a dearer stranger, passed through my mind with the feeling of a long and everlasting farewell. My husband wept over me, and prayed for my recovery; but he could not think me so ill as to make the call of the doctor imperative; and I did not press a subject which I saw was painful to him. No, sir, I would rather have died than have produced in him the slightest uneasiness; and my object in calling you in the secret manner you have witnessed, was simply to avoid causing to him the pain of thinking that my illness was so great as to render your services absolutely necessary."

The communication I now heard, which was spoken in broken sentences and after considerable pauses, in place of clearing up my difficulty, increased it, and added to my surprise. Some light was, no doubt, thrown on the cause which produced the secret manner of my visitation; but every other circumstance attending the unfortunate lady's case was merged in deeper gloom and mystery. The circumstance of a husband who loved his wife refusing to

call professional assistance, appeared to be not less extraordinary than the reason assigned for it—even with all the allowances, justified by a very prevailing prejudice, in some weak minds, against the extremity of calling a doctor. I had heard something of Colonel P——; that he was considered to be immensely rich, and known to be a deep gambler, but I never understood that he was a victim of weak or imaginary fears, and I was therefore inclined to doubt the truth of the reason assigned by the unsuspecting invalid, for the scrupulous delicacy of her husband's affection and solicitude. I pondered for a moment, and soon perceived that the nature of her complaint, and the kind of restoratives or medicines she might have been receiving, would, in all likelihood, yield me more information on the subject of my difficulty than I could procure from her broken sentences, which, at the best, only expressed the sentiments of a mind clouded with the prejudice of a devoted love and unbounded credulity. I proceeded, therefore, to ascertain the nature of her complaint; and soon discovered that the seat of it was, as she had said, in the region of the stomach, which not only produced to her great pain internally, but felt sore on the application of external pressure on the *præcordia.* Other symptoms of a disease in this principal organ were present: such as fits of painful vomiting after attempting to eat, her great emaciation, anxiety of countenance, thirst, restlessness, and debility; and, in ordinary circumstances, I would have been inclined to conclude that she laboured under some species of what we denominate *gastritis*, or inflammation of the stomach, though I could not account for such a disease not having been resolved and ended in much shorter time than the period which embraced her sufferings.

I next proceeded to ascertain what she had been taking in the form of medicaments; and discovered that her

husband, proceeding on the idea that her stomach laboured under weakness and required some tonic medicine, had administered to her, on several occasions, what we term *limatura ferri* (iron filings)—a remedy for cases of dyspepsia and bad stomachs, but not suited to the inflammatory disorders of the kind under which she was suffering. I asked her if she had any of the medicine lying by her, and she replied, with simplicity, that her husband generally took charge of it himself; but that he had that evening laid a small paper, containing a portion of it, on the top of a side-table, until he administered to her the dose she was in the habit of receiving, and had gone away without laying it past, according to his custom. I took up the paper, examined it, and found, according to the rapid investigation I bestowed on it, without the aid of any tests, that it possessed all the appearances of the genuine medicine. I, however, took the precaution of emptying a small portion of it into another paper, and slipping it into my pocket unobserved by the patient. I then told her that I thought she should discontinue the use of the powder, which was entirely unsuited to her ailment.

"That is a cruel advice, sir," she cried, in a tone of great excitement. "How can I discontinue a medicine offered to me by the hands of a husband, without being able to give any reason for rejecting his kindness? I tremble to think of repaying all the attentions of that dear man with ingratitude, and wounding his sensibility by rejecting this testimony of his solicitude and affection. I cannot—I feel I cannot. The grief I would thereby produce to him would be reflected, by sympathy, on this weak frame, which is unable to struggle much longer with the pains of flesh alone, far less with the additional anguish of a wounded mind, grieved to death at causing sorrow to the man I so dearly love. Do not, oh! do not, sir, make me an ingrate."

I was struck with the devotion of this gentle being, who actually trembled at the idea of producing uneasiness to the man whom she had raised to affluence, and who yet would not allow her the benefit of a doctor in her distress; but, while I was pleased with this exhibition of a feature in the female character I had never before seen so strongly developed, though I had read and heard much of the fidelity and affection of the women of the east, I was much chagrined at the idea that so fair and beautiful a virtue would probably prevent me from doing anything effectual for a creature who, independently of her distance from her country, had so many other claims on my sympathy. I told her that I feared I could be of little service to her if she could not resolve upon discontinuing her husband's medicine; and tried to impress upon her the necessity of conforming to my advice, if she wished to make herself well—the best mode, assuredly, of making her husband happy; but she replied that she expected I would have been able to give her something to restore her to health independently of what she got from her husband—a result she wished above all things, as she sighed for the opportunity of delighting him, by attributing to his medicines and care her restoration and happiness. I replied that that was impossible—a statement that stung her with disappointment and pain.

"Then I will take my beloved's medicines, and die!" she cried, with a low struggling voice—resigning herself to the power of her weakness.

This extraordinary resolution of a female devotee put me in mind of the immolating custom of her countrywomen, called the *suttee*. It was a complete *ultima ratio*, and put all my remedial plans at fault in an instant. Her extreme weakness, or her devoted resolution, prevented her from speaking, and I sat by her bedside totally at a loss what to do, whether to persevere in my attempt to get

her to renounce her husband's medicine and to conform to my prescriptions, or to leave her to the fate she seemed to court. I put several more questions to her, but received no other answer than a wave of the hand—a plain token of her wish that I should leave her to the tender mercies of her husband. I had now no alternative; and, rising, I bowed to her, and took my leave. I had some difficulty in finding my way out of the house; but, after several ineffectual turns through wrong passages, I reached the door through which I had entered, and returned home.

The extraordinary scene I had witnessed engaged my attention during the evening, but all my efforts at clearing up the mystery that enveloped the proceedings of these individuals were met by difficulties which for a time seemed insuperable. I sat cogitating and recogitating various theories and probabilities, and had several times examined the iron powder, which, for better observation, I had scattered on a sheet of white paper that lay on my table. My intention was to test it, and I waited the incoming of my assistant to aid me in my experiment. As I looked at it at intervals between my trains of thought, I was struck with a kind of glittering appearance it exhibited, and which was more observable when it caught my eye obliquely and collaterally, during the partial suspension of my perception by my cogitations. Roused by this circumstance, I proceeded instantly to a more minute investigation; and having, by means of a magnet, removed all the particles of iron, what was my surprise to find a residuum of triturated glass—one of the most searching and insidious poisons known in toxicology. Good God! what were my thoughts and feelings when the first flash of this discovery flared upon my mind—solving, in an instant, by the intensity of its painful light, all my doubts, and realizing all my suspicions. Every circumstance of this mysterious affair stood now revealed in clear relief—a

dark scheme of murder, more revolting in its features than any recorded in the malefactor's journal, was illumined and exposed by a light which exhibited not only the workings of the design itself, but the reason which led to its perpetration. This man had married the confiding and devoted foreigner for the sake of her immense wealth, which raised him in an instant from mediocrity to magnificence; and, having attained the object of his ambition, he had resolved—with a view to the concealment of the means whereby he effected his purpose, and regardless of the sacred obligation of gratitude he owed to her who had left her country, her relations, and friends, to trust herself to his protection and love—to immolate the faithful, kind-hearted, and affectionate creature, by a cruel and protracted murder. In her own country the cowardly wretch could not have braved the vengeance of her countrymen; but, in a distant land, where few might be expected to stand up for the rights of the injured foreigner, he had thought he might execute his scheme with secrecy and success. But now it was discovered! By one of those extraordinary detached traces of the finger of the Almighty, exposed to the convicting power of divine intellect, it was discovered!

The great excitement produced in my mind by this miraculous discovery prevented me for some time from calmly deliberating on the steps I ought to pursue, with the view of saving the poor foreigner from the designs of her murderer. The picture of the devoted being lying, like a queen, in the midst of the wealth she had brought to her husband, and trembling at the very thought of rejecting his poison, for fear of giving him the slightest pain—yet on the very point of being sacrificed; her wealth, love, confidence, and gentleness, repaid by death, and her body consigned, unlamented by friends—who might never hear of her fate—to foreign dust, rose continually on my

imagination, and interested my feelings to a degree incompatible with the exercise of a calm judgment. In proportion as my emotion subsided, the difficulty of my situation appeared to increase. I was, apparently, the only person who knew anything of this extraordinary purpose, and I saw the imprudence of taking upon myself the total responsibility of a report to the public authorities in a case where the chances of conviction would be diminished to nothing by the determination of the victim to save her destroyer, whom she never would believe guilty, and by the want of evidence of a direct nature that the powder I had tested was truly destined for her reception; while, in the event of an impeachment and acquittal of the culprit, I would be exposed to his vengeance, and his poor wife would be for ever subjected to his tyranny and oppression. On the other hand, I was at a loss to know how I could again get access to the sick victim, whom I had left without being requested to repeat my visit; and, even if that could be accomplished, I had many doubts whether she would pay the slightest attention or regard to my statement, that her husband, whom she seemed to prefer to her own divine Brama, designed to poison her. Yet it was clear that the poor victim behoved to be saved, in some way, from the dreadful fate which impended over her; and the necessity of some steps being taken with rapidity and efficacy, behoved to resolve scruples and doubts which otherwise might have been considered worthy of longer time and consideration.

Next day I found I had made little progress in coming to a resolution what step to pursue, yet every hour and minute that passed reproached me with cruelty, and my imagination brought continually before my eyes the poor victim swallowing the stated periodical quota of her death-drug. I could have no rest or peace of mind till something was done, at least to the extent of putting her on her

guard against the schemes of her cruel destroyer; and, after all my cogitations, resolutions, and schemes, I found myself compelled to rest satisfied with seeing her, laying before her the true nature of her danger, and leaving to the operation of the instinctive principle of self-preservation the working out of her ultimate safety. At the same hour of the evening at which my former visit was made, I repaired to the back entrance of the large mansion, and, upon rapping at the door, was fortunate enough to be answered by the young woman who acted formerly as my guide. She led me, at my request, instantly to the sick-room of her lady, who, having immediately before been seized with an attack of vomiting, was lying in a state of exhaustion approaching to the inanity of death. I spoke to her, and she languidly opened her eyes. I saw no prospect of being able to impress upon her comatose mind the awful truth I had come to communicate; yet I had no alternative but to make the attempt; and I accordingly proceeded, with as few words as possible, and in a tone of voice suited to the lethargic state of her mind and senses, to inform her that the medicines she was getting from the hands of her husband were fraught with deadly poison, which was alone the cause of all her sufferings and agonies, and would soon be the means of a painful death. These words I spoke slowly and impressively, and watched the effect of them with anxiety and solicitude. A convulsive shudder passed over her, and shook her violently. She opened her eyes, which I saw fill with tears, and fixed a steady look on my countenance.

"*It is impossible*," she said, with a low, guttural tone, but with much emphasis; "and if it *were* possible, I would still take his medicine, and die, rather than outlive the consciousness of love and fidelity."

These words she accompanied with a wave of her hand, as if she wished me to depart. I could not get her to

utter another syllable. I had discharged a painful duty; and, casting a look upon her, which I verily believed would be the last I would have it in my power to bestow on this personification of fidelity and gentleness, I took my departure.

I felt myself placed in a very painful position for two or three days after this interview, arising from a conviction that I had not done enough for the salvation of this poor victim, and yet without being able to fix upon any other means of rendering her any assistance, unless I put into execution a resolution that floated in my mind, to admonish her husband, by an anonymous communication, and threaten to divulge the secret of his guilt, unless he instantly desisted from his nefarious purpose—a plan that did not receive the entire sanction of my honour, however much it enlisted the approbation of my feelings. Some further time passed, and added, with its passing minutes, to my mental disquietude. One evening, when I was sitting meditating painfully on this sombre subject, a lackey, superbly dressed, was introduced to me by my servant, and stated that he had been commanded by his master, Colonel P——, to request my attendance at his house without delay. I started at the mention of the name, and the nature of the message; and the man stared at me, as I exhibited the irresolution of doubt and the perturbation of surprise, in place of returning him a direct answer. Recovering myself, I replied, that I would attend upon the instant; and, indeed, I felt a greater anxiety to fly to that house on which my thoughts were painfully fixed, than I ever did to visit the most valued friend I ever attended in distress. As I hurried along, I took little time to think of the object of my call; but I suspected, either that Colonel P—— had got some notice of my having secretly visited, in my professional capacity, his wife, and being therefore privy to his design—a state of opposing circumstances,

which he was now to endeavour in some way to counteract—or that, finding, from the extremity to which his wife was reduced, that he was necessitated to call a doctor, as a kind of cloak or cover to his cruel act, he had thus made a virtue of necessity, when, alas! it would be too late for my rendering the unfortunate creature any service. "He shall not, however, escape," muttered I, vehemently, through my teeth, as I proceeded. "He little knows that he is now calling to his assistance the man that shall hang him."

I soon arrived at the house, and rung the front door bell. The same powdered lackey who had preceded me, opened the door. I was led up two pair of stairs, and found myself in the same lobby with which I had already become somewhat familiar. I proceeded forward, thinking I was destined for the sick chamber of the lady; but the servant opened a door immediately next to that of her room, and ushered me into an apartment furnished in an elegant style, but much inferior to that occupied by his wife. In a bed lay a man of a genteel, yet sinister cast of countenance, with a large aquiline nose, and piercing black eyes. He appeared very pale and feverish, and threw upon me that anxious eye which we often find in patients who are under the first access of a serious disease; as if nature, while she kept her secret from the understanding, communicated it to the feelings, whose eloquence, expressed through the senses, we can often read with great facility. I knew, in an instant, that he was committed, by a relentless hand, to suffering, in all likelihood, in the form of a fever. He told me he was Colonel P——, and that, having been very suddenly taken ill, he had become alarmed for himself, and sent for me to administer to him my professional services. I looked at him intently; but he construed my stare into the eagerness of professional investigation. At that instant, a piercing scream rang

through the house, and made my ears tingle. I asked him who had uttered that scream, which must have come from some creature in the very extremity of agony, and made an indication as if I would hasten to administer relief to the victim. In an instant, I was close and firm in the trembling clutch of the sick man, who, with a wild and confused look, begged me not to sacrifice him to any attention to the cause of this disturbance, which was produced by a servant in the house habitually given, through fits of hysterics, to the utterance of these screams. I put on an appearance of being satisfied with this statement; but I fixed my eye relentlessly on him, as he still shook, from the combined effects of his incipient disease, and his fear of my investigating the cause of the scream. I proceeded to examine into the nature of his complaint. The symptoms described by him, and detected by my observation, satisfied me that he had been seized with an attack of virulent typhus; and from the intensity of some of the indications—particularly his languor and small pulse, his loss of muscular strength, violent pains in the head, the inflammation of his eyes, the strong throbbing of his temporal arteries, his laborious respiration, parched tongue, and hot breath—I was convinced he had before him the long sands of a rough and rapid race with death. At the close of my investigation he looked anxiously and wistfully in my face, and asked me what I conceived to be the nature of his complaint. I told him at once, and with greater openness and readiness than I usually practise, that I was very much afraid he was committed for a severe course of virulent typhus. He felt the full force of an announcement which, to those who have had any experience of this king of fevers, cannot fail to carry terror in every syllable; and falling back on his pillow, turned up his eye to heaven. At this moment, a succession of screams, or rather yells, sounded through the house; but

as I now saw that I had a chance of saving the innocent sufferer, I pretended not to regard the dreadful sounds, and purposely averted my eyes to escape the inquiring, nervous look of the sick man. I gave him some directions, promised to send some medicines, and took my leave.

As I shut the door, the waiting-maid, whom I had seen before, was standing in the door of her mistress's apartment, and beckoned me in, with a look of terror and secrecy. I was as anxious to visit her gentle mistress as she was to call me. On entering, which I did slowly and silently, to escape the ear of her husband, I found the unfortunate creature in the most intense state of agony. The ground glass she had swallowed, and a great part of which, doubtless, adhered to the stomach, was too clearly the cause of her screams; but, to my surprise, I discovered, from her broken ejaculations, that the grief of her husband's illness had been able, in its strength, to fight its way to her heart, through all her bodily agonies produced by his poison. My questions regarding her own condition were answered by hysterical sobs, mixed with ejaculations of pity, and requests to know how he was, and what was the nature of the complaint by which he had been attacked —hinting, in dubious terms, that she had been the cause of his illness, by entailing upon him the necessity of attending her, and wounding his sensitive heart by her distress. My former communications to her concerning the poison, and my caution against her acceptance of it from the hands of her intended murderer, had produced no effect upon a mind predetermined to believe nothing against the man she loved and trusted beyond all mortals. She had received it again from him after my communication; the effects of it were now exhibited in her tortured, burning viscera; and yet, in the very midst of her agonies, her faith, confidence, and love stood unshaken; a noble yet

melancholy emblem of the most elevated, yet often least valued and most abused virtues of her sex. I endeavoured to answer her fevered inquiries about her husband, by telling her that he stood in great *need of her attendance;* and that, if she would agree to follow my precepts, and put herself entirely under my advice and direction, she might, in a very short time, be enabled to perform her duty of a faithful wife and a kind nurse to her distressed partner. The first perception she caught of the meaning of my communication, lighted up her eye, even in the midst of her wringing pains; and, starting up, she cried, that she would be the most abject slave to my will, and obey me in all things, if I could assure her of the blessing of being able to act as nurse and comforter to her husband. Now I saw my opportunity. On the instant I called up and despatched the waiting-maid to my home, with directions to my assistant, to send me instantly an oleaginous mixture, and some powerful emetics, which I described in a *recipe.* I waited the return of the messenger, administered the medicines, and watched for a time their operation and effects. Notwithstanding the continued attacks that had been made on her system by the doses of an active poison, I was satisfied that, if my energies were not, in some unforeseen way, thwarted and opposed, I would be able to bring this deserving wife and pattern of her sex from the brink of the grave that had been dug for her by the hand of her husband. After leaving with the waiting-maid some directions, I proceeded home, for the purpose of preparing the necessary medicines for my other patient.

I now commenced a series of regular visits to my two patients—the illness of the husband affording me the most ample scope for saving his wife. As he gradually descended into the unavoidable depths of his inexorable disease, she, by the elastic force of youth and a good con-

stitution, operating in unison with my medicines, which were administered with the greatest regularity, gradually threw off the lurking poison, and advanced to a state of comparative safety and strength. I was much pleased to observe the salutary effects of my professional interference in behalf of my interesting patient; but could scarcely credit my own perceptions, as I had exhibited to me the most undoubted proofs, that the desire to minister to the wants and comforts of her sick husband, engrossed so completely every other feeling that might have been supposed consequent upon a restoration to health, that she seemed to disregard all other considerations. Her questions about the period when she might be able to attend him were unremitting; and every hour she was essaying to walk, though her efforts often ended in weak falls, or sinkings on the ground, when some one was required to assist her in getting up and returning to bed. She entreated me to allow her to be *carried* to his bedside; where, she said, they might mix their tears and console each other; and all my arguments against the impropriety of such an obvious mode of increasing her husband's illness, and augmenting those sufferings she was so solicitous to ameliorate, were scarcely sufficient to prevent her from putting her design into execution.

The husband's disease, which often runs a course of two months, though the crisis occurs generally between the third and fourth week, progressed steadily and relentlessly, mocking, as the fevers of that type generally do, all the boasted art of our profession. His pulse rose to the alarming height of 120; he exhibited the oppression at the chest, increased thirst, blackfurred tongue, and inarticulate, muttering speech, which are considered to be unfavourable indications; and there was, besides, a clear tendency to delirium—a common, yet critical symptom—leaving, even after the patient has recovered, and often for

years, its marks in the weakened intellect. One evening I was standing by his bedside, studying his symptoms; witnessing the excess of his sufferings, and listening to the bursts of incoherent speech which, from time to time, came from him, as if expelled from his sick spirit by some internal power. He spoke often of his wife, whom he called by the name of Espras; and, in the midst of his broken ejaculations, gushes of intense feeling came on him, filling his yellow sunken eyes with rheumy tears, and producing heavy sobs, which, repressed by his loaded chest, assumed sounds unlike anything I ever heard, and beyond my power of description. I could not well understand these indications of the working of his spirit; but I fancied that, when he felt his own agonies, became conscious of what it is to suffer a certain extremity of pain, and learned, for the first time in his life, the sad experience of an inexorable disease, which presented to him the prospect of a lingering death, his mind recurred to the situation of his wife, who, as he thought, was, or might be, enduring tortures produced by his hand, transcending even his sufferings. There seemed to be less of conscience in his mental operations, than a new-born sorrow or sympathy, wrung out of a heart naturally obdurate, by the anguish of a personal experience of the pain he himself had produced in another, who had the strongest claims on his protection and love. His mind, though volatile and wandering, and not far from verging on delirium, was not yet deranged; and I was about to put a question to him concerning his wife, whom he had not directly mentioned to me, when the door opened, and the still pale and emaciated figure of Mrs. P——, dressed in a white morning gown, entered the apartment, struggling with her weakness to get forward, and clutching, in her breathless efforts, at whatever presented itself to her nerveless arms, to support her, and aid her in her progress to the

sick-bed of her husband. The bed being in the middle of a large room, she was necessitated to trust partly to the weak powers of her limbs, which having failed her, she, in an attempt to spring forward and reach it before sinking, came short of her aim, and fell with a crash on the floor, uttering, as she stumbled, a scream of sorrow, wrung from her by the sight of her husband lying extended on a bed of sickness. The noise started the invalid, who turned his eyes wildly in the direction of the disturbance; and I rushed forwards to raise in my arms the exhausted victim. I had scarcely got her placed on her feet, when she again struggled to reach the bed; and having, by my assistance, got far enough forward, she threw herself on the body of the fever-ridden patient, ejaculating, as she seized him in her arms, and bedewed his pale face with tears—

"Frederick! my honoured husband, whom I am bound to cherish and nurse as becomes the fondest of wives, why is it that I have been deprived of this luxury of the grief-stricken heart—to watch your looks, and anticipate your wants? Thanks to the blessed powers of your faith and of mine, I have you now in my arms, and no mortal shall come between me and my love! Night and day I will watch and tend you, till the assiduities of my affection weary out the effects of your cruel disease brought on you —O God!—by your grief for me, your worthless Espras."

And she buried her head in the bosom of the sick man, and sobbed intensely. This scene, from the antithesis of its circumstances, appeared to me the most striking I had ever beheld; and, though it was my duty to prevent so exciting a cause of disturbance to the patient, I felt I had no power to stop this burst of true affection. I watched narrowly the eye of the patient; but it was too much clouded by the effects of the fever, and too nervous and fugacious, to enable me to distinguish between the effects

of disease and the working of the natural affections. But that his mind and feelings were working, and were responding to this powerful moral impulse, was proved fearfully by his rapid indistinct muttering and jabbering, mixed with deep sighs, and the peculiar sound of the repressed sobs which I have already mentioned, but cannot assimilate to any sound I ever heard. All my efforts to remove the devoted wife by entreaty were vain; she still clung to him, as if he had been on the eve of being taken from her by death. Her sobbing continued unabated, and her tears fell on his cheek. These intense expressions of love and sorrow awoke the sympathy which I thought had previously been partially excited, for I now observed that he turned away his head, while a stream of tears flowed down his face. It was now, I found, necessary, for the sake of the patient, to remove the excited lady; and I was obliged to apply a gentle force before I could accomplish my purpose. She insisted, however, upon remaining in the room, and beseeched me so piteously for this privilege, that I consented to a couch being made up for her at a little distance from the bed of her husband, whom it was her determination to tend and nurse, to the exclusion of all others. I was not, indeed, ill pleased at this resolution, for I anticipated, from her unexampled love and devotedness, an effect on the heart of her husband which might cure its vices and regenerate its affections.

On the next occasion of my stated visit, I found my patient had at last fallen into a state of absolute delirium. On a soft arm-chair, situated by his bedside, sat his wife, the picture of despair, wringing her hands, and indulging in the most extravagant demonstrations of grief and affection. The wretched man exhibited the ordinary symptoms of that unnatural excitement of the brain under which he laboured—relapsing at times into silence, then uttering a multiplicity of confused words—jabbering wildly—looking

about him with that extraordinary expression of the eye, as if every individual present was viewed as a murderer—then starting up, and, with an overstrained and choking voice, vociferating his frenzied thoughts, and then again relapsing into silence. It is but little we can do for patients in this extreme condition; but the faith his wife reposed in professional powers that had already saved her, suggested supplications and entreaties which I told her she had better direct to a higher Dispensator of hope and relief. The tumultuous thoughts of the raving victim were still at intervals rolling forth; and, all of a sudden, I was startled by a great increase of the intensity and connectedness of his speech. He had struck the chord that sounded most fearfully in his own ears. His attempt to murder the creature who now sat and heard his wild confession, was described by himself in intelligible, though broken sentences:—

"The fortune brought me by Espras," he vociferated, "is loaded by the burden of herself—that glass is not well ground—you are not so ill, my dear Espras, as to require a doctor—I cannot bear the thought of you labouring under that necessity—who can cure you so well as your devoted husband? Take this—fear not—why should love have suspicions? When she is gone, I shall have a wife of whom I may not be ashamed—yet, is she not a stranger in a foreign land? Has she not left her country, her relations, her friends, her gods, for me, whom she has raised to opulence? Cease, cease—I cannot stand these thoughts—there is a strife in this heart between the powers of hell and heaven—when will it terminate, and who shall rule my destiny?"

These words, which he accompanied with wild gestures, were followed by his usual indistinct muttering and jabbering. I directed my gaze upon his wife. She sat in the chair, motionless, with her eyes fixed on the ground as if

she had been struck with death in that position, and been stiffened into a rigidity which retained her in her place. The issues of her tenderness and affection seemed to have been sent back upon the heart, whose pulses they stopped. The killing pain of an ingratitude, ingeniously heightened to the highest grade of that hell-king of all human crimes, operating upon a mind rendered so sensitively susceptible of its influences, paralyzed the whole moral constitution of the devoted creature, and realized the poetical creation of despair. I felt inclined to soften the sternness of her grief, by quickening her disbelief of the raving thoughts of a fever-maniac; but I paused as I thought of the probable necessity of her suspicion for her future safety from the schemes of a murderer, whose evil desires might be resuscitated by the return of health. I could do nothing more at that time for the dreadful condition of the wretched husband, and less for the more dreadful state of the miserable wife; and the personal pain I experienced in witnessing this high-wrought scene of terror, forced me to depart, leaving the one still raving in his madness, and the other bound in the stern grasp of the most awful of all moral visitations.

I expected that on my next visit I would find such a change on my patient as would enable me to decide whether he would live or die; but he was still delirious, with the crowded thoughts of the events of his past life careering through his fevered brain, as if their restlessness and agitation were produced by the burning fires that chased them from their legitimate territory of the mind. There was, however, a change in one quarter. His wife's confidence and affection had withstood and triumphed over the attack of the previous day, and she was again occupied in hanging over her raving husband, shedding on his unconscious face the tear of pity, and supplying, by anticipation, every want that could be supposed incident

to his miserable condition. This new and additional proof of the strength of this woman's steadfastness, in her unparalleled fidelity and love, struck me even more forcibly than the previous indications she had given of this extraordinary feature in her character. But I was uncertain yet whether to construe her conduct as salutary or dangerous to her own personal interests—a circumstance depending on the further development of the sentiments of her husband. On that same evening the change suspected took place: the delirium abated, and consciousness, that had been driven forcibly from her throne, hastened to assume the sceptre of her authority. The crisis was past, and the patient began to be sensible of those attentions on the part of his devoted wife, which had not only the merit of being unremitting, but that of being sweetened by the tears of solicitude and the blandness of love. I marked attentively the first impressions made by her devotedness on the returning sense. I saw his look following her eye, which was continually inflamed and bedewed by the effects of her grief; and, after he had for a period of time fixed his half-conscious, half-wondering gaze on her, he turned it suddenly away, but not before he gave sufficient indications of sympathy and sorrow in a gush of tears. These manifestations were afterwards often repeated; but I thought I sometimes could perceive an abruptness in his manner, and a painful impatience of the minute, refined, and ingenious attentions of a highly-impassioned affection, which left me in doubt whether, after his disease was removed, sufficient reliance could be placed on the stability of his regeneration.

In my subsequent visits I kept up my study of the operations of his mind as well as the changes of his disease. His wife's attentions seemed rather to increase with the improvement of his health and her increased ability to discharge the duties of affection. He had improved so far

as to be in a condition to receive medicines for the recovery of the tone of his stomach. I seized the opportunity of his wife leaving for a short time his sick room, and, as I seated myself on her chair by the bedside, I took from my pocket the powder of iron-filings and triturated glass he had prepared for the poisoning of her who had latterly been contributing all the energies of love to the saving of his life.

"A chalybeate mixture," said I, while I fixed my eyes on his countenance, "has been recommended for patients in your condition, for improving the power of the stomach weakened by the continued nausea of a protracted fever. Here is a powder composed of iron-filings, a good chalybeate, which I found lying in your wife's apartment. I have none better in my laboratory, and would recommend to you a full dose of it before I depart."

The electric effect of this statement was instantaneous and remarkable. He seemed like one who had felt the sharp sting of a musket bullet sent into his body by a hand unseen—uncertain of the nature of the wound, or of the aim by which it is produced. A sudden suspicion relieved his still fevered eye, which threw upon me the full blaze of staring wonder and terror, while an accompanying uncertainty of my intention sealed his mouth and added curiosity to his look. But I followed up my intention resolutely and determinedly.

"Here is on the table," continued I, "a mucilaginous vehicle for its conveyance into the stomach. I shall prepare it instantly. To seize quickly the handle of an auspicious occasion is the soul of our art."—(Approaching the bed with the medicine in my hand.)

"I cannot, I cannot take that medicine," he cried, wildly. "What means this? Help me, Heaven, in this emergency! I cannot, I dare not take that medicine."

"Why?" said I, still eyeing him intently. "Is it be-

cause there is ground glass in it? That cannot be; because I understand it was intended for Espras, your loving, faithful wife; and who would administer so dreadful a poison to a creature so gentle and interesting? She is, besides, a foreigner in our land; and who would treat the poor unprotected stranger with the dainty that has concealed in it a lurking death? Is this the hospitality of Britain?"

Every word was a thunderstroke to his heart. All uncertainty fled before these flaming sarcasms, which carried, on the bolt of truth, the keenness of his own poison. His pain became intense, and exhibited the peculiarity of a mixture of extreme terror, directed towards me as one that had the power of hanging him, and of intense sorrow for the injury he had produced to the wife of his bosom, whose emaciated figure, hanging over him in his distress, must have been deeply imprinted on his soul. Yet it was plain that his sorrow overcame his fear; for I saw his bosom heaving with an accumulation of hysterical emotions, which convulsed his frame in the intense manner of the aerial ball that chokes the female victim of excited nerves. The struggle lasted for several minutes, and at last a burst of dissolving tenderness, removing all the obstructions of prudence or terror, and stunning my ear with its loud sound, afforded him a temporary relief. Tears gushed down his cheeks, and groans of sorrow filled the room, and might have been heard in the apartment of his wife, whose entry, I feared, might have interrupted the extraordinary scene. Looking at me wistfully, he held out his hands, and sobbed out, in a tone of despair—

"Are you my friend, or are you my enemy?"

I answered him that I was the friend of his wife—one of the brightest patterns of female fidelity I had ever seen; and if by declaring myself his friend I would save her from the designs of the poisoner, and him from the pains of the

law and the fire of hell, I would instantly sign the bond of amity.

"You have knocked from my soul the bonds of terror," he cried out, still sobbing; "and if I knew and were satisfied of one thing more, I would resign myself to God and my own breaking heart. Did Espras—yet why should I suspect one who rejects suspicion as others do the poison she would swallow from my hand, though labelled by the apothecary?—did Espras tell you what you have so darkly and fearfully hinted to me?"

I replied to him that, in place of telling me, the faithful unsuspecting creature had to that hour rejected and spurned the suspicion, as unworthy of her pure, confiding spirit.

"It is over!—it is over!" cried the changed man. "O God! How powerful is virtue! How strong is the force of those qualities of the heart which we men often treat as weak baubles to toy with, and throw away in our fits of proud spleen—the softness, the gentleness, the fidelity and devotedness of woman! How strangely, how wonderfully formed is the heart of man, which, disdaining the terrors of the rope of the executioner, breaks and succumbs at the touch of the thistle-down of a woman's love! This creature, sir, gave me my fortune, made me what I am, left for me her country and her friends, adhered to me through good and evil report—and I prepared for her a cruel death! Dreadful contrast! Who shall describe the shame, the sorrow, the humiliation of the ingrate whose crime has risen to the fearful altitude of this enormity; and who, by the tenderness and love of his devoted victim, is forced to turn his eye on the grim reward of death for love, riches, and life? Gentle, beloved, injured Espras! that emaciated form, these trembling limbs, these sunken eyes, and these weak and whispering sounds of pity and affection have touched my heart with a power that never

was vouchsafed to the tongue of eloquence. Transcending the rod of Moses, they have brought from the rock streams of blood; and every pulse is filled with tenderness and pity. Wretched fool! I was ashamed of your nativity, and of the colour you inherited from nature, and never estimated the qualities of your heart; but when shall the red-and-white beauty of England transcend my Espras in her fidelity and love, as she does in the skin-deep tints of a beguiling, treacherous face? God! what a change has come over this heart! Thanks, and prayers, and tears of blood, never can express the gratitude it owes to the great Author of our being for this miraculous return to virtue, effected by the simple means of a woman's confidence and love."

As he finished this impassioned speech, which I have repeated as correctly as my memory enabled me to commit to my note-book, he turned his eyes upwards, and remained for at least five minutes in silent prayer. As he was about finishing his wife entered. Her appearance called forth from his excited mind a burst of affection, and seizing her in his arms, he wept over her like a child. He was met as fervently by the gentle and affectionate creature, who, grateful to God for this renewed expression of her husband's love, turned up her eyes to heaven, and wept aloud. I never witnessed a scene like this. I left them to their enjoyment, and returned home.

I was subsequently a constant visitor at the house of Colonel P——; and, about eighteen months after his recovery, I officiated as accoucheur to his wife on the occasion of the birth of a son. Other children followed afterwards, and bound closer the bonds of that conjugal love which I had some hand in producing, and which I saw increase daily through a long course of years.

THE ADOPTED SON.

A TALE OF THE TIMES OF THE COVENANTERS.

"Oh, for the sword of Gideon, to rid the land of tyrants, to bring down the pride of apostates, and to smite the ungodly with confusion!" muttered John Brydone to himself, as he went into the fields on the September of 1645, and beheld that the greater part of a crop of oats, which had been cut down a few days before, was carried off. John was the proprietor of about sixty acres on the south bank of the Ettrick, a little above its junction with the Tweed. At the period we speak of, the talented and ambitious Marquis of Montrose, who had long been an apostate to the cause of the Covenant—and not only an apostate, but its most powerful enemy—having, as he thought, completely crushed its adherents in Scotland, in the pride of his heart led his followers towards England, to support the tottering cause of Charles in the south, and was now with his cavalry quartered at Selkirk, while his infantry were encamped at Philiphaugh, on the opposite side of the river.

Every reader has heard of Melrose Abbey—which is still venerated in its decay, majestic in its ruins—and they have read, too, of the abode of the northern wizard, who shed the halo of his genius over the surrounding scenery. But many have heard of Melrose, of Scott, and of Abbotsford, to whom the existence of Philiphaugh is unknown. It, however, is one of those places where our forefathers laid the foundation of our freedom with the bones of its enemies, and cemented it with their own blood. If the stranger

who visits Melrose and Abbotsford pursue his journey a few miles farther, he may imagine that he is still following the source of the Tweed, until he arrive at Selkirk, when he finds that for some miles he has been upon the banks of the Ettrick, and that the Tweed is lost among the wooded hills to the north. Immediately below Selkirk, and where the forked river forms a sort of island, on the opposite side of the stream, he will see a spacious haugh, surrounded by wooded hills, and forming, if we may so speak, an amphitheatre bounded by the Ettrick, between the Yarrow and the Tweed. Such is Philiphaugh; where the arms of the Covenant triumphed, and where the sword of Montrose was blunted for ever.

Now, the sun had not yet risen, and a thick, dark mist covered the face of the earth, when, as we have said, John Brydone went out into his fields, and found that a quantity of his oats had been carried away. He doubted not but they had been taken for the use of Montrose's cavalry; and it was not for the loss of his substance that he grieved, and that his spirit was wroth, but because it was taken to assist the enemies of his country, and the persecutors of the truth; for than John Brydone, humble as he was, there was not a more dauntless or a more determined supporter of the Covenant in all Scotland. While he yet stood by the side of his field, and, from the thickness of the morning, was unable to discern objects at a few yards' distance, a party of horsemen rode up to where he stood. "Countryman," said one who appeared to be their leader, "can you inform us where the army of Montrose is encamped?"

John, taking them to be a party of the Royalists, sullenly replied—"There's mony ane asks the road they ken," and was proceeding into the field.

"Answer me!" demanded the horseman angrily, and raising a pistol in his hand—"Sir David Lesly commands you,"

"Sir David Lesly!" cried John—"the champion of the truth!—the defender of the good cause! If ye be Sir David Lesly, as I trow ye be, get yer troops in readiness, and, before the mist vanish on the river, I will deliver the host o' the Philistines into your hand."

"See that ye play not the traitor," said Lesly, "or the nearest tree shall be unto thee as the gallows was to Haman which he prepared for Mordecai."

"Do even so to me, and more also," replied John, "if ye find me false. But think ye that I look as though I bore the mark of the beast upon my forehead?" he continued, taking off his Lowland bonnet, and gazing General Lesly full in the face.

"I will trust you," said the General; and, as he spoke, the van of his army appeared in sight.

John having described the situation of the enemy to Sir David, acted as their guide until they came to the Shaw Burn, when the General called a halt. Each man having partaken of a hurried repast, by order of Sir David, the word was given along the line that they should return thanks for being conducted to the place where the enemy of the Kirk and his army slept in imaginary security. The preachers at the head of the different divisions of the army gave out a psalm, and the entire host of the Covenanters, uncovering their heads, joined at the same moment in thanksgiving and praise. John Brydone was not a man of tears, but, as he joined in the psalm, they rolled down his cheeks, for his heart felt, while his tongue uttered praise, that a day of deliverance for the people of Scotland was at hand. The psalm being concluded, each preacher offered up a short but earnest prayer; and each man, grasping his weapon, was ready to lay down his life for his religion and his liberty.

John Brydone, with his bonnet in hand, approaching Sir David, said—"Now, sir, I that ken the ground, and the situation o' the enemy, would advise ye, as a man who has

seen some service mysel', to halve your men; let the one party proceed by the river to attack them on the one side, and the other go round the hills to cut off their retreat."*

"Ye speak skilfully," said Sir David, and he gave orders as John Brydone had advised.

The Marquis of Montrose had been disappointed in reinforcements from his sovereign. Of two parties which had been sent to assist him in his raid into England, one had been routed in Yorkshire, and the other defeated on Carlisle sands, and only a few individuals from both parties joined him at Selkirk. A great part of his Highlanders had returned home to enjoy their plunder; but his army was still formidable, and he imagined that he had Scotland at his feet, and that he had nothing to fear from anything the Covenanters could bring against him. He had been writing despatches throughout the night; and he was sitting in the best house in Selkirk, penning a letter to his sovereign, when he was startled by the sounds of cannon and of musketry. He rushed to the street. The inhabitants were hurrying from their houses—many of his cavalry were mingling, half-dressed, with the crowd. "To horse!—to horse!" shouted Montrose. His command was promptly obeyed; and, in a few minutes, at the head of his cavalry, he rushed down the street leading to the river towards Philiphaugh. The mist was breaking away, and he beheld his army fleeing in every direction. The Covenanters had burst upon them as a thunderbolt. A thousand of his best troops lay dead upon the field.† He endeavoured to rally

* "But halve your men in equal parts,
Your purpose to fulfil;
Let ae half keep the water-side,
The rest gae round the hill."
Battle of Philiphaugh—Border Ballad.

† Sir Walter Scott says that "the number of slain in the field did not exceed three or four hundred." All the authorities I have seen state the number at a thousand. He also accuses Lesly of abusing his victory by slaughtering many

them, but in vain; and, cutting his way through the Covenanters, he fled at his utmost speed, and halted not until he had arrived within a short distance of where the delightful watering town of Innerleithen now stands, when he sought a temporary resting-place in the house of Lord Traquair.

John Brydone, having been furnished with a sword, had not been idle during the engagement; but, as he had fought upon foot, and the greater part of Lesly's army were cavalry, he had not joined in the pursuit; and, when the battle was over, he conceived it to be as much his duty to act the part of the Samaritan, as it had been to perform that of a soldier. He was busied, therefore, on the field in administering, as he could, to the wounded; and whether they were Cavalier or Covenanter, it was all one to John; for he was not one who could trample on a fallen foe, and in their hour of need he considered all men as brothers. He was passing within about twenty yards of a tent upon the Haugh, which had a superior appearance to the others—it was larger, and the cloth which covered it was of a finer quality; when his attention was arrested by a sound unlike all that belonged to a battle-field—the wailing and the cries of an infant! He looked around, and near him lay the dead body of a lady, and on her breast, locked in her cold arms, a child of a few months old was struggling. He ran towards them—he perceived that the lady was dead—he took the child in his arms—he held it to his bosom—he kissed its cheek—"Puir thing!—puir thing!" said John; "the innocent hae been left to perish amang the unrighteous." He was bearing away the child, patting its cheek, and caressing it as he went, and forgetting the soldier in the nurse, when he said unto himself—"Puir innocent!—an' belike yer wrang-headed faither is fleeing for his life, an' thinking aboot ye

of his prisoners in cold blood. Now, it is true that a hundred of the Irish adventurers were shot; but this was in pursuance of an act of both Parliaments, and not from any private revenge on the part of General Lesly.

an' yer mother as he flees! Weel, ye may be claimed some day, an' I maun do a' in my power to gie an account o' ye." So John turned back towards the lifeless body of the child's mother; and he perceived that she wore a costly ring upon her finger, and bracelets on her arms; she also held a small parcel, resembling a book, in her hands, as though she had fled with it, without being able to conceal it, and almost at the door of her tent she had fallen with her child in her arms, and her treasure in her hand. John stooped upon the ground, and took the ring from her finger, and the bracelets from her arms; he took also the packet from her hands, and in it he found other jewels, and a purse of gold pieces. "These may find thee a faither, puir thing," said he; "or if they do not, they may befriend thee when John Brydone cannot."

He carried home the child to his own house, and his wife having at that time an infant daughter at her breast, she took the foundling from her husband's arms, and became unto it as a mother, nursing it with her own child. But John told not his wife of the purse, nor the ring, nor the rich jewels.

The child had been in their keeping for several weeks, but no one appeared to claim him. "The bairn may hae been baptized," said John; "but it wud be after the fashion o' the sons o' Belial; but he is a brand plucked from the burning—he is my bairn noo, and I shall be unto him as a faither—I'll tak upon me the vows—and, as though he were flesh o' my ain flesh, I will fulfil them." So the child was baptized. In consequence of his having been found on Philiphaugh, and of the victory there gained, he was called Philip; and as John had adopted him as his son, he bore also the name of Brydone. It is unnecessary for us to follow the foundling through his years of boyhood. John had two children—a son named Daniel, and Mary, who was nursed at his mother's breast with the orphan

Philip. As the boy grew up, he called his protectors by the name of father and mother; but he knew they were not such, for John had shown him the spot upon the Haugh where he had found him wailing on the bosom of his dead mother. Frequently, too, when he quarrelled with his playfellows, they would call him the "Philiphaugh foundling," and "the Cavalier's brat;" and on such occasions Mary was wont to take his part, and, weeping, say "he was her brother." As he grew up, however, it grieved his protector to observe that he manifested but little of the piety, and less of the sedateness of his own children. "What is born i' the bane, isna easily rooted oot o' the flesh," said John; and in secret he prayed and wept that his adopted son might be brought to a knowledge of the truth. The days of the Commonwealth had come, and John and his son Daniel rejoiced in the triumphs of the Parliamentary armies, and the success of its fleets; but, while they spoke, Philip would mutter between his teeth—"It is the triumph of murderers!" He believed that but for the ascendancy of the Commonwealth, he might have obtained some tidings of his family; and this led him to hate a cause which the activity of his spirit might have tempted him to embrace.

Mary Brydone had always been dear to him; and, as he grew towards manhood, he gazed on her beautiful features with delight; but it was not the calm delight of a brother contemplating the fair face of a sister; for Philip's heart glowed as he gazed, and the blush gathered on his cheek. One summer evening they were returning from the fields together, the sun was sinking in the west, the Ettrick murmured along by their side, and the voice of the wood-dove was heard from the copse-wood which covered the hills.

"Why are you so sad, brother Philip?" said Mary; "would you hide anything from your own sister?"

"Do not call me *brother*, Mary," said he earnestly—"do not call me *brother!*"

"Who would call you brother, Philip, if I did not?" returned she affectionately.

"Let Daniel call me brother," said he, eagerly; "but not you—not you!"

She burst into tears. "When did I offend you, Philip," she added, "that I may not call you brother?"

"Never, Mary!—never!" he exclaimed; "call me Philip—*your* Philip!—anything but brother!" He took her hand within his—he pressed it to his bosom. "Mary," he added, "I have neither father, mother, brother, nor kindred—I am alone in the world—let there be something that I can call *mine*—something that will love me in return! Do you understand me, Mary?"

"You are cruel, Philip," said she, sobbing as she spoke; "you know I love you—I have always loved you!"

"Yes! as you love Daniel—as you love your father; but not as"——

"You love Mr. Duncan," he would have said; but his heart upbraided him for the suspicion, and he was silent. It is here necessary to inform the reader that Mr. Duncan was a preacher of the Covenant, and John Brydone revered him much. He was much older than Mary, but his heart cleaved to her, and he had asked her father's consent to become his son-in-law. John, though a stern man, was not one who would force the inclination of his daughter; but Mr. Duncan was, as he expressed it, "one of the faithful in Israel," and his proposal was pleasing to him. Mary, however, regarded the preacher with awe, but not with affection.

Mary felt that she understood Philip—that she loved him, and not as a brother. She hid her face upon his shoulder, and her hand returned the pressure of his. They entered the house together, and her father perceived that his daughter's face was troubled. The manner of both was changed. He was a shrewd man as well as a stern man, and he also suspected the cause.

"Philip," said he calmly, "for twenty years hae I protected ye, an' watched ower ye wi' a faither's care, an' I fear that, in return for my care, ye hae brought sorrow into the bosom o' my family, an' instilled disobedience into the flesh o' my ain flesh. But though ye hae cleaved—as it maun hae been inherent in your bluid—into the principles o' the sons o' this warld, yet, as I ne'er found ye guilty o' a falsehood, an' as I believe ye incapable o' ane, tell me truly, why is your countenance an' that o' Mary changed—and why are ye baith troubled to look me straight in the face? Answer me—hae ye taught her to forget that she is your sister?"

"Yes!" answered Philip; "and can it offend the man who saved me, who has watched over me, and sheltered me from infancy till now, that I should wish to be his son in more than in name?"

"It does offend me, Philip," said the Covenanter; "even unto death it offends me! I hae consented that my dochter shall gie her hand to a guid an' a godly man, who will look after her weelfare baith here and hereafter. And ye kenned this—she kenned it, and she didna refuse; but ye hae come like the son o' darkness, an' sawn tares amang the wheat."

"Father," said Philip, "if you will still allow me to call you by that name—foundling though I am—unknown as I am—in what am I worse than him to whom you would sacrifice your daughter's happiness?"

"Sacrifice her happiness!" interrupted the old man; "hoo daur ye speak o' happiness, wha kens nae meanin' for the word but the vain pleasures o' this sinfu' warld! Think ye that, as a faither, an' as ane that has my offspring to answer for, that I daur sacrifice the eternal happiness o' my bairn, for the gratification o' a temporary feelin' which ye encourage the day and may extinguish the morn? Na, sir; they wha wad ken what true happiness is, maun first learn to crucify human passions. "Mary," added he,

sternly, turning to his daughter, "repeat the fifth commandment."

She had been weeping before, and she now wept aloud.

"Repeat it!" replied her father yet more sternly.

"Honour thy father and thy mother," added she, sobbing as she spoke.

"See, then, bairn," replied her father, "that ye remember that commandment in yer heart, as weel as on yer tongue. Remember, too, that o' a' the commands, it's the only ane to which a promise is attached; and, noo, mark what I say, an', as ye wadna disobey me, see, at yer peril, that ye ne'er permit this young man to speak to ye again, save only as a brither."

"Sir," said Philip, "we have grown up together like twin tendrils on the same vine, and can ye wonder that our hearts have become entwined round each other, or that they can tear asunder because ye command it! Or, could I look on the face of an angel"——

"Out on ye, blasphemer!" interrupted the Covenanter —"wad ye apply siccan epithets to a bairn o' mine? Once for all, hear me, Philip; there are but twa ways o't, and ye can tak yer choice. It's the first time I hae spoken to ye roughly, but it isna the first time my spirit has mourned ower ye. I hae tried to lead ye in the right path; ye hae had baith precept and example afore ye; but the leaven o' this warld—the leaven o' the persecutors o' the Kirk and the Covenant—was in yer very bluid; an' I believe, if opportunity had offered, ye wad hae drawn yer sword in the unholy cause. A' that I could say, an' a' that I could do, religion has ne'er had ony place in yer heart; but ye hae yearned aboot yer faither, and ye hae mourned aboot yer mother—an' that was natural aneugh—but oh! ye hae also desired to cling to the cauld formality o' Episcopacy, as they nae doot did: an' should ye e'er discover that yer parents hae been Papists, I believe that ye wad become ane too!

An' aften, when the conversation turned upon the apostate Montrose, or the gallant Lesly, I hae seen ye manifest the spirit an' the very look o' a persecutor. Were I to gie up my dochter to such a man, I should be worse than the heathen wha sacrifice their offspring to the abomination o' idols. Noo, Philip, as I hae tauld ye, there are but twa ways o't. Either this very hour gie me your solemn promise that ye will think o' Mary as to be yer wife nae mair, or, wi' the risin' o' to-morrow's sun, leave this house for ever!"

"Sir," said Philip bitterly, "your last command I can obey, though it would be with a sad heart—though it would be in despair—your first I cannot—I will not!"

"You must—you *shall!*" replied the Covenanter.

"Never," answered Philip.

"Then," replied the old man, "leave the roof that has sheltered ye frae yer cradle!"

"I will!" said Philip, and the tears ran down his cheeks. He walked towards Mary, and, with a faltering voice, said —"Farewell, Mary!—Farewell! I did not expect this; but do not forget me—do not give your hand to another—and we shall meet again!"

"You shall not!" interrupted the inexorable old man.

Mary implored her father, for her sake, and for the sake of her departed mother, who had loved Philip as her own son, that he would not drive him from the house, and Daniel, too, entreated; but their supplications were vain.

"Farewell, then!" said Philip; "and, though I depart in misery, let it not be with thy curse, but let the blessing of him who has been to me a father until now, go with me."

"The blessin' o' Heaven be wi' ye and around ye, Philip!" groaned the Covenanter, struggling to conceal a tear: "but, if ye will follow the dictates o' yer rebellious heart and leave us, tak wi' ye yer property."

"My property!" replied Philip.

"Yer property," returned the old man. "Twenty years has it lain in that drawer, an' during that time eyes hae not seen it, nor fingers touched it. It will assist ye noo; an' when ye enter the warld, may throw some light upon yer parentage."

He went to a small drawer, and, unlocking it, took out the jewels, the bracelet, the ring, and the purse of gold, and, placing them in Philip's hands, exclaimed—"Fareweel!—fareweel!—but it maun be!" and he turned away his head.

"O Mary!" cried Philip, "keep—keep this in remembrance of me," as he attempted to place the ring in her hand.

"Awa, sir!" exclaimed the old man, vehemently, "wad ye bribe my bairn into disobedience, by the ornaments o' folly an' iniquity! Awa, ye son o' Belial, an' provoke me not to wrath!"

Philip groaned, he dashed his hand upon his brow, and rushed from the house. Mary wept long and bitterly, and Daniel walked to and fro across the room, mourning for one whom he loved as a brother. The old man went out into the fields to conceal the agony of his spirit; and, when he had wandered for a while, he communed with himself, saying, "I hae dune foolishly, an' an ungodly action hae I performed this nicht; I hae driven oot a young man upon a wicked warld, wi' a' his sins an' his follies on his head; an', if evil come upon him, or he plunge into the paths o' wickedness, his bluid an' his guilt will be laid at my hands! Puir Philip!" he added; "after a', he had a kind heart!" And the stern old man drew the sleeve of his coat across his eyes. In this frame of mind he returned to the house. "Has Philip not come back?" said he, as he entered. His son shook his head sorrowfully, and Mary sobbed more bitterly.

"Rin ye awa doun to Melrose, Daniel," said he, "an'

I'll awa up to Selkirk, an' inquire for him, an' bring him back. Yer faither has allowed passion to get the better o' him, an' to owercome baith the man an' the Christian."

"Run, Daniel, run!" cried Mary eagerly. And the old man and his son went out in search of him.

Their inquiries were fruitless. Days, weeks, and months rolled on, but nothing more was heard of poor Philip. Mary refused to be comforted; and the exhortations, the kindness, and the tenderness shown towards her by the Rev. Mr. Duncan, if not hateful, were disagreeable. Dark thoughts, too, had taken possession of her father's mind, and he frequently sank into melancholy; for the thought haunted him that his adopted son, on being driven from his house, had laid violent hands upon his own life; and this idea embittered every day of his existence.

More than ten years had passed since Philip had left the house of John Brydone. The Commonwealth was at an end, and the second Charles had been recalled; but exile had not taught him wisdom, nor the fate of his father discretion. He madly attempted to be the lord and ruler of the people's conscience, as well as King of Britain. He was a libertine with some virtues—a bigot without religion. In the pride, or rather folly of his heart, he attempted to force Prelacy upon the people of Scotland; and he let his bloodhounds loose, to hunt the followers of the Covenant from hill to hill, to murder them on their own hearths, and, with the blood of his victims, to blot out the word *conscience* from the vocabulary of Scotchmen. The Covenanters sought their God in the desert and on the mountains which He had reared; they worshipped him in the temples which His own hands had framed; and there the persecutor sought them, the destroyer found them, and the sword of the tyrant was bathed in the blood of the worshipper! Even the family altar was profaned; and to raise the voice of prayer and praise in the cottage to the King of kings, was held to

be as treason against him who professed to represent Him on earth. At this period, too, Graham of Claverhouse—whom some have painted as an angel, but whose actions were worthy of a fiend—at the head of his troopers, who were called by the profane, *the ruling elders of the kirk*, was carrying death and cold-blooded cruelty throughout the land.

Now, it was on a winter night in the year 1677, a party of troopers were passing near the house of old John Brydone, and he was known to them not only as being one who was a defender of the Covenant, but also as one who harboured the preachers, and whose house was regarded as a conventicle.

"Let us rouse the old psalm-singing heretic who lives here from his knees," said one of the troopers.

"Ay, let us stir him up," said the sergeant who had the command of the party; "he is an old offender, and I don't see we can make a better night's work than drag him along, bag and baggage, to the captain. I have heard as how it was he that betrayed our commander's kinsman, the gallant Montrose."

"Hark! hark!—softly! softly!" said another, "let us dismount—hear how the nasal drawl of the conventicle moans through the air! My horse pricks his ears at the sound already. We shall catch them in the act."

Eight of the party dismounted, and, having given their horses in charge to four of their comrades, who remained behind, walked on tiptoe to the door of the cottage. They heard the words given and sung—

> "When cruel men against us rose
> To make of us their prey!"

"Why, they are singing treason," said one of the troopers. "What more do we need?"

The sergeant placed his forefinger on his lips, and for about ten minutes they continued to listen. The song

of praise ceased, and a person commenced to read a chapter. They heard him also expound to his hearers as he read.

"It is enough," said the sergeant; and, placing their shoulders against the door, it was burst open. "You are our prisoners!" exclaimed the troopers, each man grasping a sword in his right hand, and a pistol in the left.

"It is the will of Heaven!" said the Rev. Mr. Duncan; for it was he who had been reading and expounding the Scriptures; "but, if ye stretch forth your hands against a hair o' our heads, He, without whom a sparrow cannot fall to the ground, shall remember it against ye at the great day o' reckoning, when the trooper will be stripped of his armour, and his right hand shall be a witness against him!"

The soldiers burst into a laugh of derision. "No more of your homily, reverend oracle," said the sergeant; "I have an excellent recipe for short sermons here; utter another word and you shall have it!" The troopers laughed again, and the sergeant, as he spoke, held his pistol in the face of the preacher.

Besides the clergyman, there were in the room old John Brydone, his son Daniel, and Mary.

"Well, old greybeard," said the sergeant, addressing John, "you have been reported as a dangerous and disaffected Presbyterian knave, as we find you to be; you are also accused of being a harbourer and an accomplice of the preachers of sedition; and, lo! we have found also that your house is used as a conventicle. We have caught you in the act, and we shall take every soul of you as evidence against yourselves. So come along, old boy—I should only be doing my duty by blowing your brains against the wall; but that is a ceremony which our commander may wish to see performed in his own presence!"

"Sir," said John, "I neither fear ye nor your armed

men. Tak me to the bloody Claverhouse, if you will, and at the day o' judgment it shall be said—'*Let the murderers o' John Brydone stand forth!*"

"Let us despatch them at once," said one of the troopers.

"Nay," said the sergeant; "bind them together, and drive them before us to the captain: I don't know but he may wish to *do justice* to them with his own hand."

"The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel," groaned Mr. Duncan.

Mary wrung her hands—"Oh, spare my father!" she cried.

"Wheesht, Mary!" said the old man; "as soon wad a camel pass through the eye o' a needle, as ye wad find compassion in the hands o' these men!"

"Bind the girl and the preacher together," said the sergeant.

"Nay, by your leave, sergeant," interrupted one of the troopers, "I wouldn't be the man to lift a hand against a pretty girl like that, if you would give me a regiment for it."

"Ay, ay, Macdonald," replied the sergeant—"this comes of your serving under that canting fellow, Lieutenant Mowbray—he has no love for the service; and confound me if I don't believe he is half a Roundhead in his heart. Tie the hands of the girl, I command you."

"I will not!" returned Macdonald; "and hang me if any one else shall!" And, with his sword in his hand, he placed himself between Mary and his comrades.

"If you do not bind her hands, I shall cause others to bind yours," said the sergeant.

"They may try that who dare!" returned the soldier, who was the most powerful man of the party; "but what I've said I'll stand to."

"You shall answer for this to-morrow," said the sergeant, sullenly, who feared to provoke a quarrel with the trooper.

"I will answer it," replied the other.

John Brydone, his son Daniel, and the Rev. Mr. Duncan, were bound together with strong cords, and driven from the house. They were fastened, also, to the horses of the troopers. As they were dragged along, the cries and the lamentations of Mary followed them; and the troopers laughed at her wailing, or answered her cries with mockery, till the sound of her grief became inaudible in the distance, when again they imitated her cries, to harrow up the feelings of her father.

Claverhouse, and a party of his troops, were then in the neighbourhood of Traquair; and before that man, who knew not what mercy was, John Brydone, and his son, and the preacher were brought. It was on the afternoon of the day following that on which they had been made prisoners, that Claverhouse ordered them to be brought forth. He was sitting, with wine before him, in the midst of his officers; and amongst them was Lieutenant Mowbray, whose name was alluded to by the sergeant.

"Well, knaves!" began Claverhouse, "ye have been singing, praying, preaching, and holding conventicles.—Do ye know how Grahame of Claverhouse rewards such rebels?"

As the prisoners entered, Lieutenant Mowbray turned away his head, and placed his hand upon his brow.

"Sir," said John, addressing Claverhouse, "I'm neither knave nor rebel—I hae lifted up my voice to the God o' my faithers, according to my conscience; and, unworthy as I am o' the least o' His benefits, for threescore years and ten he has been my shepherd and deliverer, and, if it be good in His sight, He will deliver me now. My trust is in Him, and I fear neither the frown nor the sword o' the persecutor."

"Have done, grey-headed babbler!" cried Claverhouse.

Lieutenant Mowbray, who still sat with his face from the prisoners, raised his handkerchief to his eyes.

"Captain," said Mr. Duncan, "there's a day coming when ye shall stand before the great Judge, as we now stand before you; and when the remembrance o' this day, and the blood o' the righteous which ye hae shed, shall be written with letters o' fire on yer ain conscience, and recorded against ye; and ye shall call upon the rocks and mountains to cover ye"———

"Silence!" exclaimed Claverhouse. "Away with them!" he added, waving his hand to his troopers—"shoot them before sunrise!"

Shortly after the prisoners had been conveyed from the presence of Claverhouse, Lieutenant Mowbray withdrew; and having sent for the soldier who had interfered on behalf of Mary—"Macdonald," he began, "you were present yesterday when the prisoners, who are to die to-morrow, were taken. Where did you find them?"

"In the old man's house," replied the soldier; and he related all that he had seen, and how he had interfered to save the daughter. The heart of the officer was touched, and he walked across his room, as one whose spirit was troubled. "You did well, Macdonald!" said he, at length —"you did well!" He was again silent, and again he added—"And you found the preacher in the old man's house—*you found* HIM *there!*" There was an anxious wildness in the tone of the lieutenant.

"We found him there," replied the soldier.

The officer was again silent—again he thoughtfully paced across the floor of his apartment. At length, turning to the soldier, he added—"I can trust you, Macdonald. When night has set in, take your horse and ride to the house of the elder prisoner, and tell his daughter—the maiden whom you saved—to have horses in readiness for her father, her brother, and—and her—her *husband!*" said the lieutenant, faltering as he spoke; and when he had pronounced the word *husband*, he again paused, as though

his heart were full. The soldier was retiring—"Stay," added the officer, "tell her, her father, her brother, and —the preacher, shall not die; before daybreak she shall see them again; and give her this ring as a token that ye speak truly."

He took a ring from his finger, and gave it into the hands of the soldier.

It was drawing towards midnight. The troops of Claverhouse were quartered around the country, and his three prisoners, still bound to each other, were confined in a small farm-house, from which the inhabitants had been expelled. They could hear the heavy and measured tread of the sentinel pacing backward and forward in front of the house; the sound of his footsteps seemed to measure out the moments between them and eternity. After they had sung a psalm and prayed together—"I am auld," said John Brydone, "and I fear not to die, but rather glory to lay down my life for the great cause; but, oh, Daniel! my heart yearns that yer bluid also should be shed—had they only spared ye, to hae been a protector to our puir Mary! —or had I no driven Philip frae the house"——

"Mention not the name of the cast-away," said the minister.

"Dinna mourn, faither," answered Daniel, "an arm mair powerful than that of man will be her supporter and protector."

"Amen!" responded Mr. Duncan. "She has aye been cauld to me, and has turned the ear o' the deaf adder to the voice o' my affection; but even noo, when my thochts should be elsewhere, the thocht o' her burns in my heart like a coal."

While they yet spoke, a soldier, wrapt up in a cloak, approached the sentinel, and said—

"It is a cold night, brother."

"Piercing," replied the other, striking his feet upon the ground.

"You are welcome to a mouthful of my spirit-warmer," added the first, taking a bottle from beneath his cloak.

"Thank ye!" rejoined the sentinel; "but I don't know your voice. You don't belong to our corps, I think."

"No," answered the other; "but it matters not for that —brother soldiers should give and take."

The sentinel took the bottle and raised it to his lips; he drank, and swore the liquor was excellent.

"Drink again," said the other; "you are welcome; it is as good as a double cloak around you." And the sentinel drank again.

"Good night, comrade," said the trooper. "Good night," replied the sentinel; and the stranger passed on.

Within half an hour, the same soldier, still muffled up in his cloak, returned. The sentinel had fallen against the door of the house, and was fast asleep. The stranger proceeded to the window—he raised it—he entered. "Fear nothing," he whispered to the prisoners, who were bound to staples that had been driven into the opposite wall of the room He cut the cords with which their hands and their feet were fastened.

"Heaven reward ye for the mercy o' yer heart, and the courage o' this deed," said John.

"Say nothing," whispered their deliverer, "but follow me."

Each man crept from the window, and the stranger again closed it behind them. "Follow me, and speak not," whispered he again; and, walking at his utmost speed, he conducted them for several miles across the hills; but still he spoke not. Old John marvelled at the manner of their deliverer; and he marvelled yet more when he led them to Philiphaugh, and to the very spot where, more than thirty years before, he had found the child on the bosom of its dead mother; and there the stranger stood still, and, turning round to those he had delivered—"Here

we part," said he; "hasten to your own house, but tarry not. You will find horses in readiness, and flee into Westmoreland; inquire there for the person to whom this letter is addressed; he will protect you." And he put a sealed letter into the hands of the old man, and, at the same time, placed a purse in the hands of Daniel, saying, "This will bear your expenses by the way—Farewell! —farewell!" They would have detained him, but he burst away, again exclaiming, as he ran—"Farewell!"

"This is a marvellous deliverance," said John; "it is a mystery, an' for him to leave us on this spot—on *this very spot*—where puir Philip"——And here the heart of the old man failed him.

We need not describe the rage of Claverhouse, when he found, on the following day, that the prisoners had escaped; and how he examined and threatened the sentinels with death, and cast suspicious glances upon Lieutenant Mowbray; but he feared to accuse him, or quarrel with him openly.

As John, with the preacher and his son, approached the house, Mary heard their footsteps, rushed out to meet them, and fell weeping upon her father's neck. "My bairn!" cried the old man; "we are restored to ye as from the dead! Providence has dealt wi' us in mercy an' in mystery."

His four farm-horses were in readiness for their flight; and Mary told him how the same soldier who had saved her from sharing their fate, had come to their house at midnight, and assured her that they should not die, and to prepare for their flight; "and," added she, "in token that he who had sent him would keep his promise towards you, he gave me this ring, requesting me to wear it for your deliverer's sake."

"It is Philip's ring!" cried the old man, striking his hand before his eyes—"it is Philip's ring!"

terms with which civility could not refuse to comply; and a few weeks confirmed Mr Newton the ardent and the professed lover of Ellen. But her heart was still engaged; nor could she abandon even a hopeless passion. The character, the fortune, the unobjectionable person of Mr Newton, were urged to her, by her only friends, with such energy, but mildness, of persuasion, that, enforced by the declarations of her admirer, she was prevailed upon to promise him her hand, though not her heart; and a day was named for the celebration of their nuptials.

The necessary preparations now engaged the attention of Mr Newton and the two matron ladies; whilst Ellen passively yielded to the assiduities of her friends, and suffered the adornments of her person, and the intended provisions of settlement to be adjusted, without once interfering.

A few mornings before the appointed day, as Ellen was seated at breakfast with her mother and aunt, a note was put into her hands. She saw at a glance that it was from Mr Newton; and she immediately handed it across the table to Mrs Arundel, who read:—

"Madam,—That your heart is not at all interested in the intended event, you have, with candour, frequently acknowledged to me. You will not, therefore, even wish to receive an apology for my releasing you from an unsuitable engagement.

"My long-lost son—my son whom I had for years resigned to Heaven—is restored to me; and Providence, which has bestowed on me this consummate happiness, will not permit me to add to it a wish which concerns myself. He is young; he is amiable; and more worthy of your regard than I am. It is my sincere wish that he should become your husband. I shall, therefore, take an early opportunity of introducing him to you.

"My real name is *not* what you have hitherto considered it to be. I changed it when, on the supposed death of my

son, I retired from my usual place of residence to a distant part of the kingdom, to avoid the importunities of some worthless relations; but, until I have the honour of disclosing to you in person my real name, I beg to subscribe myself, Madam, yours very truly,

"J. B. NEWTON.

"*To Miss Ellen Arundel.*"

When this most extraordinary epistle was read, Ellen turned deadly pale, and would certainly have fallen to the ground, had not a young man entered through the window which opened out on the lawn, and caught her in his arms. He was followed by Mr Newton.

"Ellen," exclaimed the latter, "behold my son!"

The sorrowing girl cast her eyes upon the form of him who held her.

"Meredith!" she cried, and threw herself, weeping, upon his shoulder. Her tears were tears of joy. Little more remains to tell. Ellen Arundel gave her hand to the son on the very day which had been appointed for her nuptials with the father.

CHATELARD.

Some time after the unfortunate Queen Mary had established her court at Holyrood, on her return from France, to ascend the throne of her ancestors, a stranger arrived at a certain tavern or hostelry, kept by one Goodal, at the foot of the Canongate of Edinburgh. The former had last come from Leith, where he had been landed from a French vessel some two or three hours previously. He was a young man, probably about three or four and twenty, tall and handsome in person, of a singularly pleasing countenance, and of mild and exceedingly gentleman-like demeanour. His lofty forehead and expressive eye bespoke the presence of genius, or, at least, of an intellect of a very high order; while his general manners indicated a refined and cultivated mind. There was marked, however, on the brow of the interesting stranger very palpable traces of saddening thoughts—his whole countenance, indeed, exhibiting the characteristics of a deep and rooted melancholy; but it was of a gentle kind, and bore no likeness to the stern gloominess of disappointed ambition. His sadness was evidently a sadness of the heart—the result of some grievous pressure on its best and tenderest feelings and affections.

After having partaken of some refreshment, the stranger desired a small measure of wine to be brought him. This order was executed by mine host in person; and, indeed, from what afterwards followed, it seemed to have been given with an express view to that result; for, on the landlord's placing the wine before his guest, the latter requested him, with great politeness of manner, to sit down and share

it with him; saying that he wanted a little information on two or three particular points. Mine host, seating himself as desired, expressed his readiness to afford him any information of which he himself was possessed. Having thanked the former for his civility, and pressed him, not in vain, to taste of his own wine, the stranger said—

"Is the queen, my friend, just now at Holyrood?"

He was answered in the affirmative. The querist paused, sighed, and next inquired if she walked much abroad—what were the hours she devoted to that recreation—whether she was accompanied by many attendants on these occasions—and whether her ordinary promenade was a place easy of access. Having been informed on all these points, he again relapsed into thought, and again sighed profoundly. After a short time, however, he once more recovered himself, and suddenly exclaimed, but more by way of soliloquy than inquiry—

"Is she not beautiful—transcendently beautiful?"

Mine host, who was not a little surprised by the abruptness of the question, and the enthusiasm of manner in which it was expressed, replied, that she surely was "Just as bonny a creature as he had ever clapt ee on—a plump, sonsy, nice-lookin lass."

A slight expression of disgust, or rather of horror, at the homely terms employed by mine host in speaking of the beauty of the queen, passed over the countenance of his guest. It was, however, but momentary, and was not observed, or at any rate not understood, by him whose language had called it forth.

"Ay, beautiful is she," went on the enthusiastic stranger, leaning back in his chair, and gazing on the roof, in a fit of ecstasy, and in seeming unconsciousness of the presence of a third party—"beautiful is she to look upon, as is the rising sun emerging from the purpled east; beautiful as his setting amidst the burnished clouds of the west; lovely as

the full moon hanging midway in her field of azure; grateful to the sight as the green fields of spring, or the flowers of the garden; and pleasant to the ear are the tones of her voice, as the song of the nightingale in the grove, or the sound of the distant waterfall."

Here the speaker paused in his rhapsody, continued silent for some moments, then suddenly returning, as it were, to a sense of the circumstances in which he was placed, he brought his hands over his forehead and eyes, as one recovering from an agony of painful and melancholy thoughts. Surprised by this extraordinary conduct of his guest, the landlord of the house began to conceive that he had got into the company of a madman; yet he marvelled much what description of madness it could be, since it was made evident only when the queen was spoken of—the stranger speaking on all other subjects rationally and composedly.

"She walks not much abroad, you say, my friend?" said the latter, resuming the conversation which he had broken off to give utterance to the rhapsody which has just been quoted.

"Very seldom, sir," replied mine host; "for ye see she doesna fin hersel quite at hame yet amang us; but she'll come to by and by, I've nae doot."

"And she is not easy of access, you say—no chance of one being able to throw himself in her way?"

"Unco little, I should think," replied mine host, "unless she could be fa'n in wi' gaun to the chapel to mass; for she still abides by thae abominations, for a' John Knox can say till her."

A flush of resentment and indignation crossed the pale countenance of the stranger at the last expressions of the innkeeper, and he threw a glance at him strongly expressive of these feelings, but suddenly checked himself, paused for a moment, and then resumed his queries in the calm and gentle tones which seemed natural to him—

"How likes she the country, know ye?"

"Indeed, I canna weel say," replied mine host; "but I rather doot, frae what I hear, she's no athegither reconciled till't yet. She thinks, I daursay, we're rather a roughspun set o' folk—a wee thing coorse i' the grain or sae."

"Ay, that ye are, that ye are," said the stranger, with more candour than courtesy, again throwing himself back in his chair, and again beginning to rhapsodise as before. "She is among ye—the beautiful, the gentle, the accomplished, the refined—as a fawn amongst a herd of bears. She is in your wild and savage land, like a lovely and tender flower growing in the cleft of a rock—a sweet and gentle thing, blooming alone in the midst of rudeness and barrenness. Oh, uncongenial soil! Oh, discordant association! Dearest, cruellest, loveliest of thy sex!"

If mine host was amazed at the first outpouring of his guest's excited mind, it will readily be believed that it was not lessened by this second ebullition of fervour and passion. He, in truth, now became convinced that he was distracted; and, under this impression, felt a strong desire to be quit of him as soon as possible. With this view, he took an early opportunity of stealing unobserved out of the apartment—a feat which he found no difficulty in performing, as his guest seemed ultimately so wholly wrapped up in his own thoughts, as to be quite unconscious of what was either said or done in his presence. Soon after mine host had retired, the stranger ordered paper, pen, and ink to be brought him. They were placed upon his table, he himself the while walking up and down the apartment with measured stride and downcast look, as if again lost in profound and perplexing thought; and at intervals the sound of his footsteps, thus traversing his chamber, was heard throughout the whole of the night. The stranger had slept none; he had not even retired to seek repose; but those periods during the night—and they were of considerable length—in

which all was silent in his apartment, were employed in writing; and when morning came, the result of his labours was exhibited in a letter, curiously, or rather fanciffully, folded, tied with a green silk thread, and highly perfumed. This letter was addressed on the back, "To the Most Illustrious Princess, Mary, Queen of Scotland."

Having brought the proceedings of the stranger to this point, we will shift the scene to the sitting apartment of the queen in Holyrood. Here, surrounded with her maids, the young and lovely princess was, at the moment of which we speak, engaged in working embroidery, and laughing and chatting with her attendants, amongst whom were two or three young French ladies, who had accompanied her from France. The queen and her maids were thus employed, then, when the gentleman-usher, who stood at the door of the apartment, entered, and, with a low obeisance, presented a letter to the queen. It was the same as that addressed to her by the stranger, and above referred to. The queen took the letter, with a gracious smile, from the person presenting it, and, contemplating it for a moment, before she opened it, with a look of pleased surprise—

"This, sure," she said, "is from none of our Scottish subjects: the fold is French." And she sighed. "It has the cut and fashion of the *billet doux* of St Germain; and," she added, laughing, "the precise flavour, too, I declare. But I should know this handwriting," she went on; "I have seen it before. This, however, will solve the mystery." And she tore the letter open, and was instantly employed in reading it, blushing and smiling by turns, as she proceeded with the perusal. When she had done, "Maria," she said, raising her eyes from the paper, and addressing one of her French ladies, "who, think you, is this letter from?"

"I cannot guess, madam," replied the young lady appealed to.

"Do try," rejoined Mary.

"Nay, indeed, I cannot," said the former, now pausing in her work, and looking laughingly at her mistress. "Perhaps from the Count Desmartine, or from Dufour, or Dubois."

"No, no, no," replied the queen, laughing; "neither of these, Maria; but I will have compassion on your curiosity, and tell you. Would you believe it?—it is from Chatelard, the poet."

"Chatelard!" repeated the maiden, in amazement. "What in all the earth can have brought him here?"

"Nay, I know not," said the queen, blushing, for she guessed, or rather feared, the cause. "But read, and judge for yourself," she added, handing her attendant the letter, which contained a very beautiful laudatory poem, full of passion and feeling, addressed to herself, and which the writer concluded by requesting that he might be permitted to form part of her court; delaring that it would be joy inexpressible to him to be near her person—he cared not in how mean a capacity. The having opportunities of seeing and serving her, he said, would reconcile him to any degradation of rank—to any loss, save that of honour.

"In truth, very pretty verses," said the lady-in-waiting, returning the poem to the queen; "but, methinks, somewhat over-bold."

"Why, I do think so too, Maria," replied Mary. "Chatelard rather forgets himself; but poets, you know, have a license, and I cannot be harsh to the poor young man. It would be cruel, ungenerous, and unworthy of me."

"But what say you, madam, to his request to be attached to your court?"

"Really, as to that, I know not well what to say, indeed," rejoined the queen. "Chatelard, you know, Maria, is a gentleman, both by birth and education. He is accomplished in a very high degree, and of a graceful person and

pleasing manners, and would thus do no discredit to our court; but, I fear me, he might be guilty of some indiscretions—for he is a child of passion as well as song—that might lead himself into danger, and bring some blame on me. Still, I cannot think of rejecting altogether his humble suit, so prettily preferred; and, if he would promise to conduct himself with becoming gravity and reserve in all matters, and at all times, I should have no objection that he was attached to our court. I will, at all events, make trial of him for a short space."

Having said this, the queen, now addressing the ladies present generally, went on—

"Ladies, I will shortly introduce to you a new gallant; but I pray ye take care of your hearts; for he is, I warrant ye, one especially given to purloining these little commodities. He is handsome, accomplished, and a poet; so mind ye, ladies, I have warned you—be on your guard. Kerr," she now called out to a page in waiting, "go to the hostelry whence this letter came, and say to the gentleman by whom it has been sent, that we desire to see him forthwith. Let him accompany you, Kerr."

The page instantly departed; and we will avail ourselves of his short absence on this mission, to say briefly who Chatelard was—what was his object in coming to the Scottish court—and of what nature were the fears which the queen expressed regarding him.

Chatelard, then, was a young French gentleman of rank, of rare accomplishments, and a poet of very considerable excellence. His seeking to attach himself to Mary's court, was the result of a violent and unhappy attachment to her person; and her fears for him, proceeding from a suspicion of this attachment, were, that he would commit himself by some rash expression of his feelings. She was displeased with his presumptuous love, yet found she could not, as a woman, but look on it with pity and compassion; and hence

her disposition to treat with kindness and affability its unhappy victim. Prudence, indeed, would certainly have dictated another course than what Mary pursued with Chatelard, in thus admitting him to her presence; but Mary's error here was an error of the heart, and more to be regretted than blamed.

In a short while after the messenger had been despatched with the invitation to Chatelard, the door of the queen's apartment was thrown wide open, and that person entered. His bow to the queen was exceedingly graceful; and not less so, though measured with scrupulous exactness in their expression of deference, were those he directed to her ladies. Chatelard's countenance was at this instant suffused with a blush, and it was evident he was under the excitement of highly-agitated feelings; but he lost not, for a moment, nor in the slightest degree, his presence of mind; neither did these feelings prevent him conducting himself at this interview with the most perfect propriety.

"Chatelard," said the queen, after the ceremonies of a first salutation were over, "I perceive you have lost none of your cunning in the gentle craft. These were really pretty lines you sent me—choice in expression, and melodiously arranged. I assure thee it is a very happy piece."

"How could it be otherwise, madam," replied Chatelard, bowing low, "with such a subject?"

"Nay, nay," said Mary, laughing and blushing at the same time, "I am no subject, Chatelard, but an anointed queen. Thou canst not make a subject of me."

Chatelard now in turn blushed, and said, smiling, "Your wit, madam, has thrown me out; but, avoiding this play on words, my position is good, undeniable. All men acknowledge it."

"Go to—go to, Chatelard—thou wert ever a flatterer. But 'tis a poet's trade. Thou art a dangerous flatterer, however; for thou dost praise so prettily that one cannot

suspect thy sincerity, nor be angry with thee, even when thou deservest that they should. But enough of this in the meantime. Thou mayst now retire; and I think the sooner the better, for the safety of these fair maidens' hearts, and your own peace of mind, which a longer stay might endanger. Our chamberlain will provide thee with suitable apartments, and see to thy wants. Mark," she added, laughingly, "we retain thee in our service in the capacity of our poet—of court poet—a high and honourable appointment; and thy reward shall be the smiles and approbation of these fair ladies—the beauty of all and each of whom I expect thou wilt forthwith embalm in immortal verse."

Chatelard, bowing, was now about to retire, when the queen, again addressing him, said, "We will send for thee again in the afternoon, to bear us company for awhile, when thou wilt please bring with thee some of thy newest and choicest madrigals."

Expressing a deep sense of the honour proposed to be conferred on him, of the queen's kind condescension, and avowing his devotedness to her service, Chatelard withdrew, and was provided with the promised apartments by the express orders of Mary herself. To these apartments we shall follow the enthusiastic but audacious lover. On being left alone, Chatelard again fell into one of those reveries which we have already described, and again launched into that strain of extravagant adulation which, on another occasion, we represented him as indulging in. Again he compared Mary, in his incoherent ravings, to everything that is beautiful in earth, sea, and sky; but comparing her to these only that he might assert how far she surpassed them. There were mingled, too, with his eulogiums, on this occasion, expressions of that imprudent passion which subsequently at once urged him to commit the most daring offences, and blinded him to their consequences. Poor Chatelard's ravings, in the instance of which we are just speaking, were

unconsciously uttered; but they were unfortunately loud enough to arrest the attention of the domestics, who were passing to and fro in the lobby into which the door of his apartment opened. These, attracted by his rapturous exclamations, listened, from time to time, at his door, and were highly amused with the rhapsodies of the imprudent poet. The latter, becoming more and more vehement, and, in proportion, more entertaining, the domestics finally gathered in a cluster around the door, to the number of six or eight, and, with suppressed laughter, overheard all that the excited and unguarded inmate chose to utter. That, however, was so incoherent, or at least of so high-flown a character, that the listeners could make nothing of it; and, as they could not, they immediately concluded it to be nonsense, and the speaker a madman. But there came one to the spot, at this unfortunate moment, who, with sharper intellect and more apt comprehension, at once discovered the meaning that lurked under the florid language of the poet's ill-timed soliloquies.

While the servants were crowded around the door of Chatelard's apartment, too intent on their amusement to notice the approach of any one, another party, we say, had advanced to within a few paces of where they stood. Here, with his arms folded across his breast, he had remained observed for several seconds, gazing with a look of surprise and displeasure on the merry group assembled around the poet's door. He was, however, at length discovered, when the knot of listeners instantly broke up in the greatest hurry and alarm.

"How now," exclaimed the unexpected intruder—a person of about thirty years of age, of rather slender form, of cold and haughty demeanour, and austere countenance—"How now?" he exclaimed, in a voice whose tones were naturally severe—"what means this idling?—what do ye all here, knaves, in place of attending to your duties?"

Instead of answering this question, the terrified domestics were now endeavouring to make off in all directions; but the querist's curiosity, or perhaps suspicion, having been excited by what he had seen, he instantly arrested their progress, by calling on them, in a voice of increased severity and vehemence, to stop.

"Come hither, Johnstone," he exclaimed, addressing one of the fugitives—"I must know what you have been all about." And, without waiting for an answer, "Who occupies this apartment?" he inquired, pointing to that in which was Chatelard.

"And please ye, my lord," replied Johnstone, bowing with the most profound respect—"ane that we think's no very wise. He's been bletherin awa there to himsel, saving yer honour's presence, like a bubbly-jock, for this half-hour back, and we can neither mak tap, tail, nor mane o' what he's sayin."

"What! a madman, Johnstone?" said the Earl of Murray, the queen's half-brother, for it was no less a personage; then hurriedly added, "Who is he?—what is he?—where is he from?—when came he hither?"

The man answered categorically—

"I dinna ken, my lord, wha he is; but, frae the thinness o' his chafts, I tak him to be ane o' your French laun-loupers. He cam to the palace about twa hours syne."

The earl's curiosity was now still further excited, and, without saying a word more, he drew near to the door of Chatelard's apartment, and became also an auditor of the poor poet's unguarded language; but not such as it was in the case of the listeners who had preceded him; to him that language was perfectly intelligible—at least to the extent of informing him of Chatelard's ambitious love. To Murray this was a secret worth knowing; and, in the hope that he might discover this attachment to be reciprocal, and thus acquire an additional influence over the queen, his sister,

at the expense of her reputation, he considered it a singularly fortunate incident. Perhaps he expected that it would do even more for him than this: that it would eventually help him to the accomplishment of certain daring views towards the crown itself, of which he was not unsuspected. Whether, however, he was able to trace, in distinct and definite lines, any consequences favourable to himself from the fact which had just come to his knowledge, it is certain he was pleased with the discovery, and considered it as an important acquisition. That he viewed it in this light, indeed, was evident even by his countenance, cautiously guarded as its expressions ever were.

On being satisfied of the fact of Chatelard's attachment to the queen, he withdrew from the door with a look and brief expression of satisfaction, and went directly in quest of the chamberlain. On finding whom—

"So, Mr Chamberlain," he said, "we have got, I find, another animal added to our herd of fawning, drivelling courtiers. Pray, who or what is he, this person who has taken up his quarters in the northern gallery, and by whose authority has he been installed there?"

"By the queen's, my lord," replied the chamberlain. "I have had express and direct orders from the queen herself, to provide the gentleman with apartments in the palace, and to see to his suitable entertainment."

"Ah, indeed," said the earl, biting his lip, and musing for a moment. "By her own express orders!" he repeated. "It is very well." Then, after a pause—"Know ye this favoured person's name, Mr Chamberlain?"

"Chatelard," replied the latter.

"Chatelard! Chatelard!" repeated the earl, mechanically, and again musing; "why, I think I have heard of that gallant before. He is one of those triflers called poets, methinks—a versifier, a scribbler of jingling rhymes. Is it not so?"

"I have heard the queen say so, my lord," replied the chamberlain. "She has spoken of him in my hearing as a poet."

"Ah! the same, the same," said the earl; "but how obtained he access to the queen, know ye?"

"Through his own direct application, my lord. He addressed a poetical epistle to her majesty, I understand, from Geodal's hostelry, where he had taken up his quarters in the first place, requesting permission to wait upon her."

"And it was granted?" interrupted the earl.

"It was, my lord; and he has already had an audience."

"Ah! so!" said the earl, without yet betraying, or having, during any part of this conversation, betrayed, the slightest emotion or symptom of the deep interest he took in the communications which were being made to him. "Know ye," he went on, "if that favour is to be soon again conferred on him? When will he again be admitted to the presence?"

"That, my lord, rests on the queen's pleasure; but I hear say that he is to attend her again this evening in her sitting apartment."

"So, so," said the earl, nodding his head, as he uttered the words. And, turning on his heel, he walked away without further remark.

From the officer with whom he had just been speaking, the Earl of Murray carefully concealed the motives which had prompted his inquiries, but determined, henceforth, to watch with the utmost vigilance the proceedings of the queen and Chatelard, until some circumstance should occur that might put them both fairly within his power. Unaware of the dangerous surveillance under which he was already placed, it was with a delight which only he himself perhaps could feel, that Chatelard received, in the evening, the promised invitation from the queen to attend her and her ladies in their sitting chamber. The invitation was conveyed in some playful verses—an art in which Mary

excelled — written on embossed paper. The enthusiastic poet read the delightful lines a thousand times over, dwelt with rapture on each word and phrase, and finally kissed the precious document with all the eagerness and fervour of a highly-excited and uncontrollable passion. Having indulged in these tender sensibilities for some time, Chatelard at length folded up the unconscious object of his adoration, thrust it into his bosom, took up a small *portfeuille*, covered with red morocco leather, gilt, and embossed, the depository of his poetical effusions, and hurried to the apartment of the queen, where he was speedily set to the task of reading his compositions, for the entertainment of the assembled fair ones; and it is certain that on more than one of them the tender and impassioned manner of the bard, as he recited his really beautiful verses, added to his highly prepossessing appearance and graceful delivery, made an impression by no means favourable to their night's repose. It would, however, perhaps be more tedious than interesting to the reader, were we to detail all that passed on the night in question in the queen's apartment; to record all the witty and pleasant things that were said and done by the queen, her ladies, and her poet. Be it enough to say, that the latter retired at a pretty late hour; his imprudent passion, we cannot say increased—for of increase it would not admit—but strengthened in its wild and ambitious hopes.

From that fatal night, poor Chatelard firmly believed that his love was returned—that he had inspired in the bosom of Mary a passion as ardent as his own. Into this unhappy error the poet's own heated and disturbed imagination had betrayed him, by representing in the light of special marks of favour, occurrences that were merely the emanations of a kind and gentle nature—thus fatally misled by a passion which, if notorious for occasioning groundless fears, is no less so for inspiring unfounded hopes.

I ever appear again before her and her friends? Even now, perhaps, she is dressing to be my wife, or weeping in the arms of her bridesmaid. The thought will drive me mad. For Godsake, Cameron, get under way, and land me again either at Greenock or where you first took me up, or I am utterly undone. Do this, and I will forget all I have suffered and am suffering."

"I would, upon my soul," he said, "were it in my power, though I should die in a jail; but, while this gale lasts, it were folly to attempt it. Besides, I am not sole proprietor of the lugger—I am only captain. My crew are sharers in the cargo. I would not get their consent. The thought of the evil I was unintentionally doing you, gave me more concern than the fear of capture. Had the storm not come on, I would have risked all to have landed you somewhere in Scotland; but it was so severe, and blowing from the land, that there was no use to attempt it. I hope, however, the weather will now moderate, and the wind shift, when I will run you back, or procure you a passage in the first craft that leaves for Scotland."

I made no answer to him, I was so absorbed in my own reflections. I walked the deck like one distracted, praying for a change in the weather. For other three days it blew, with less or more violence, from the same point—during which time I scarcely ever ate or drank, and never went to bed. On the forenoon of Monday, the wind shifted. I went immediately ashore in the boat, and found a brig getting under way for Leith. I stepped on board, and took farewell of Captain Cameron, whom I never saw again, and wish I had never seen him in my life.

After a tedious passage of nine days, during which we had baffling winds and calms, we reached Leith Roads about seven in the evening. It was low water, and the brig could not enter the harbour for several hours. I was put ashore in the boat, and hastened up to the Black Bull

Inn, in order to secure a seat in the mail for Glasgow, which was to start in a few minutes. As I came up Leith Walk, my feelings became of a mixed nature. I thought of Widow Niel and the murder, as I looked over at the Calton; then my mind reverted to my bride. I got into the coach, and was soon on the way to Glasgow. I laid myself back in a corner, and kept a stubborn silence. I could not endure to enter into conversation with my fellow-travellers: I scarce heard them speak—my mind was so distracted by what had befallen me, and what might be the result.

Pale, weary, and exhausted, I reached my lodgings between three and four o'clock of the morning of the seventeenth day from that in which I had left it in joy and hope. After I had knocked, and was answered, my landlady almost fainted at the sight of me. She had believed me dead; and my appearance was not calculated to do away the impression, I looked so ghastly from anxiety and the want of sleep. Her joy was extreme when she found her mistake. I undressed and threw myself on my bed, where I soon fell into a sound sleep, the first I had enjoyed since my involuntary voyage.

I did not awake until about eight o'clock, when I arose and dressed. I did not haste to Eliza, as my heart urged me, lest my sudden appearance should have been fatal to her. I wrote her a note, informing her I was in health, and would call and explain all after breakfast. I sent off my card, and immediately waited upon my employers. They were more surprised than pleased at my return. Another had been placed in my situation, and they did not choose to pay him off when I might think proper to return after my unaccountable absence. My soul fired at the base insinuation; my voice rose, as I demanded to know if they doubted my veracity. With an expression of countenance that spoke daggers, one of them said—

"We doubt, at least, your prudence in going on board an unknown vessel; but let us proceed to business—we have found all your books correct to a farthing, and here is an order for your salary up to your leaving. Good morning!"

I received it indignantly; and, bowing stiffly, left them. I was not much cast down at this turn my affairs had taken so unexpectedly. I had no doubt of finding a warm reception from Eliza, hurried to her parent's house, and rung the bell for admittance. Judge my astonishment when her brother opened the door, with a look as if we had never met, and inquired what I wanted. The blood mounted to my face—I essayed to speak; but my tongue refused its office; I felt bewildered, and stood more like a statue than a man. In the most insulting manner, he said—"There is no one here who wishes any intercourse with you." And he shut the door upon me.

Of everything that befell me for a length of time, from this moment, I am utterly unconscious; when I again awoke to consciousness, I was in bed at my lodgings, with my kind landlady seated at my bedside. I was so weak and reduced I could scarce turn myself; the agitation I had undergone, and the cruel receptions I had met on my return, had been too much for my mind to bear; a brain fever had been the consequence, and my life had been despaired of for several days. I would have questioned my landlady; but she urged silence upon me, and refused to answer my inquiries. I soon after learned all. I had been utterly neglected by those to whom I might have looked for aid or consolation; but the bitterest thought of all was, that Eliza should cast me off without inquiry or explanation. I could not bring my mind to believe she did so of her own accord. She must, I thought, be either cruelly deceived or under restraint; for she and her friends could not but know the situation I was in. I vainly strove to call my wounded pride to my aid, and drive her from

my thoughts; but the more I strove, the firmer hold she took of me. As soon as I could hold my pen, I wrote to her in the most moving terms; and, after stating the whole truth and what I had suffered, begged an interview, were it to be our last—for my life or death, I said, appeared to depend upon her answer. In the afternoon I received one: it was my own letter, which had been opened, and enclosed in an envelope. The writing was in her own hand. Cruel woman! all it contained was, that she had read, and now returned my letter as of her own accord, and by the approbation of her friends; for she was firmly resolved to have no communication with one who had used her so cruelly, and exposed her to the ridicule of her friends and acquaintances. This unjust answer had quite an opposite effect from what I could have conceived a few hours before; pity and contempt for the fickle creature took the place of love; my mind became once more tranquil; I recovered rapidly, and soon began to walk about and enjoy the sweets of summer. I met my fickle fair by accident more than once in my walks, and found I could pass her as if we had never met. Her brother I had often a mind to have horsewhipped; but the thought that I would only give greater publicity to my unfortunate adventure, and be looked upon as the guilty aggressor, prevented me from gratifying my wish.

Glasgow had now become hateful to me, otherwise I would have commenced manufacturer upon my own account, as was my intention had I married Eliza. In as short a period as convenient, I sold off the furniture of the house I had taken, at little or no loss, and found that I still was master of a considerable sum. Having made a present to my landlady for her care of me, I bade a long adieu to Glasgow, and proceeded by the coach to Leeds, where I procured a situation in a house with which our Glasgow house had had many transactions.

As I fear I am getting prolix, I shall hurry over the next few years I remained in Leeds. I became a partner of the house; our transactions were very extensive, more particularly in the United States of America, where we were deeply engaged in the cotton trade. It was judged necessary that one of the firm should be on the spot, to extend the business as much as possible. The others being married men, I at once volunteered to take this department upon myself, and made arrangements accordingly. I proceeded towards Liverpool by easy stages on horseback, as the coaches at that period were not so regular as they are at present.

On the second day after my leaving Leeds, the afternoon became extremely wet towards evening; so that I resolved to remain all night in the first respectable inn I came to. I dismounted, and found it completely filled with travellers, who had arrived a short time before. It was with considerable difficulty I prevailed upon the hostess to allow me to remain. She had not a spare bed; all had been already engaged; the weather continued still wet and boisterous, and I resolved to proceed no farther that night, whether I could obtain a bed or not. I, at length, arranged with her that I should pass the night by the fireside, seated in an arm-chair. Matters were thus all set to rights, and supper over, when a loud knocking was heard at the door. An additional stranger entered the kitchen where I sat, drenched with rain and benumbed with cold; and, after many difficulties upon the side of the hostess, the same arrangements were made for him.

As our situations were so similar, we soon became very intimate. I felt much interest in him. He was of a frank and lively turn in conversation, and exceedingly well informed on every subject we started. A shrewd eccentricity in the style and matter of his remarks, forced the conviction upon his hearers, that he was a man of no mean

capacity; there was also a restless inquietude in his manner, which gave him the appearance of having a slight shade of insanity. At one time his bright black eye was lighted up with joy and hilarity, as he chanted a few lines of some convivial song. In a few minutes, a change came over him, and furtive, timid glances stole from under his long dark eyelashes. Then would follow a glance so fierce, that it required a firm mind to endure it unmoved. These looks became more frequent as his libations continued; for he had consumed a great quantity of liquor, and seemed to me to be in that frame of mind when one strives in vain to forget his identity.

The other inmates of the house had long retired, and all was hushed save the voice of my companion. I felt no inclination to sleep; the various scenes of my life were floating over my mind, as I gazed into the bright fire that glowed before me, while the storm raged without. My companion had at length sunk into a troubled slumber; his head resting upon his hand, which was supported by the table, and his intelligent face half turned from me. While I sat thus, my attention was roused by a low, indistinct murmuring from the sleeper: he was evidently dreaming—for, although there were a few disjointed words here and there pronounced, he still slept soundly.

Gradually his articulation became more distinct and his countenance animated; but his eyes were closed. I became much interested; for this was the first instance of a dreamer talking in his sleep I had ever witnessed. I watched him. A gleam of joy and pleasure played around his well-formed mouth, while the few inarticulate sounds he uttered resembled distant shouts of youthful glee. Gradually the tones became connected sentences; care and anxiety, at times, came over his countenance; in heart-touching language, he bade farewell to his parent and the beloved scenes of his youth; large drops of moisture stole from under his closed

eyelids. The transitions of his mind were so quick, that it required my utmost attention to follow them; but I never heard such true eloquence as came from this dreamer. I had seen most of the performers of our modern stage, and appreciated their talents; but what I at this time witnessed, in the actings of genuine nature, surpassed all their efforts.

Gradually the shades of innocence departed from his countenance; his language became adulterated by slang phrases, and his features assumed a fiendish cast that made me shudder. He showed that he was familiar with the worst of company; care and anxiety gradually crept over his countenance; he had, it seemed, commenced a system of fraud upon his employers and been detected; grief and despair threw over him their frightful shadows; pale and dejected, he pleaded for mercy, for the sake of his father, in the most abject terms. He now spoke with energy and connection—it was to his companions in jail; but hope had fled, and a shameful death seemed to him inevitable.

His trial came on. He proceeded to court—his lips appeared pale and parched—a convulsive quiver agitated the lower muscles of his face and neck—he seemed to breathe with difficulty—his head sank lower upon the hand that supported it—he had been condemned—he was now in his solitary cell—his murmurs breathed repentance and devotion—his sufferings appeared to be so intense that large drops of perspiration stood upon his forehead—he was engaged with the clergyman, preparing for death. Remembering what I had suffered in my own dreams, I resolved to awake him, and, to do so, gave the arm that lay upon the table a gentle shake. A shudder passed over his frame, and he sank upon the floor.

All that I have narrated had occurred in a space of time remarkably short. I rose to lift him to his seat, and make an apology for the surprise I had given him; but he was quite unconscious. The noise of his fall had alarmed the

landlady, who, with several of the guests, entered as I was stooping with him in my arms, attempting to raise him. I was so much shocked when I found the state he was in, that I let him drop, and recoiled back in horror, exclaiming, "Good God! have I killed him! Send for a surgeon." The idea that I had endeavoured to awake him in an improper time came with strong conviction upon me, and forced the words out of my mouth.

They raised him up and placed him on his seat. I could not offer the smallest assistance. Every effort was used to restore him in vain, and a surgeon sent for, but life had fled. During all this time I had remained in a stupor of mind; suspicion fell upon me that I had murdered him; I had been alone with him, and seen stooping over the body when they entered; and my exclamation at the time, and my confusion, were all construed as sure tokens of my guilt. I was strictly guarded until a coroner's inquest could be held upon the body.

I told the whole circumstances as they had occurred; but my narrative made not the smallest impression. I was not believed—an incredulous smile, or a dubious shake of the head, was all that I obtained from my auditors. I then kept silence, and refused to enter into any further explanation, conscious that my innocence would be made manifest at the inquest, which must meet as soon as the necessary steps could be taken. I was already tried and condemned by those around me—every circumstance was turned against me, and the most prominent was that I was Scotch. Many remarks were made, all to the prejudice of my country, but aimed at me. My heart burned to retort their unjust abuse; but I was too indignant to trust myself to utter the thoughts that swelled my heart almost to bursting.

The surgeon had come, and was busy examining the body of the unfortunate individual, when a new traveller

arrived. He appeared to be about sixty years of age, of a pleasing countenance, which was, however, shaded by anxiety and grief. Sick and weary of those around me, I had ceased to regard them; but I raised my eyes as the new comer entered; and was at once struck by a strong resemblance, as I thought, between him and the deceased. The stranger appeared to take no interest in what was going on, but urged the landlady to make haste and procure him some refreshment, while his horse was being fed. He was in the utmost hurry to depart, as important business required his immediate attendance in London. The loquacious landlady forced him to listen to a most exaggerated account of the horrid murder which the Scotchman had committed in her house. The story was so much distorted by her inventions, that I could not have recognized the event, if the time and place, and her often pointing to me and the bed on which the body was laid, had not identified it. I could perceive a faint shudder come over his frame, as she finished her romance. The surgeon came from his examination of the body. He was a man well advanced in years, of an intelligent and benevolent cast of countenance. She inquired with what instrument the murder had been perpetrated.

"My good lady," said the surgeon, "I can find no marks of violence upon the body, and I cannot say whether the individual met his death by violence or the visitation of God."

"Oh, sir," cried the hostess, "I am certain he was murdered; for I saw them struggling on the floor as I entered the room; and he said himself that he had murdered him."

"Peace, good woman," said the surgeon, who turned to me, and requested to know the particulars from myself; "for I am persuaded," he continued, "that no outward violence has been sustained by the deceased."

I once more began to narrate to him the whole circumstance. As I proceeded with the dream, the stranger suddenly became riveted in his attention; his eyes were fixed upon me; the muscles of his face were strangely agitated, as if he was restraining some strong emotion; wonder and anxiety were strongly expressed by turns, until I mentioned one of the names I had heard in the dream. Uttering a heart-rending groan, or rather scream, he rose from his seat and staggered to the bed, where he fell upon the inanimate body, and sobbed audibly as he kissed the cold forehead, and parted the long brown hair that covered it.

"Oh, Charles," he cried, "my son, my dear lost son! have I found you thus, who was once the stay and hope of my heart!"

There was not a dry eye in the room after this burst of agonized nature. He rose from the bed and approached me. Looking mildly in my face, he said—

"Stranger, be so good as continue your account of this sad accident; for both our sakes, I hope you are innocent of any violence upon my son."

Overcome by his manner, in kindness to him I suggested that it would be better were only the surgeon and himself present at the recital. Several of those present protested loudly against my proposal, saying I would make my escape if I was not guarded. My anger now rose—I could restrain myself no longer—I cast an indignant glance around, and, in a voice at its utmost pitch, dared any one present to say I had used violence against the unfortunate young man. All remained silent. In a calmer manner, I declared I had no wish to depart, urgent as my business was, until the inquest was over; and, if they doubted my word, they were welcome to keep strict watch at the door and windows.

The old man perceived the kindness of my motive for

withdrawing with him, and his looks spoke his gratitude as we retired.

I once more stated every circumstance as it had occurred, from the time of his son's arrival until he fell from the chair. As I repeated the words I could make out in the early part of the dream, his father wept like a child, and said—"Would to God he had never left me!" When I came to the London part, he groaned aloud and wrung his hands. I was inclined more than once to stop; but he motioned me to proceed, while tears choked his utterance. When I had made an end, he clasped his hands, and, raising his face to heaven, said—"I thank Thee, Father of mercies! Thy will be done. He was the last of five of Thy gifts. I am now childless, and have nothing more worth living for but to obey Thy will. I thank Thee that in his last moments it can be said of him as it was of thy apostle—'Behold, he prayeth!'"

For some time we remained silent, reverencing the old man's grief. The surgeon first broke silence:—"Stranger," he said, "I have not a doubt of your innocence of any intention to injure the person of the deceased, but your humane intention to awaken him was certainly the immediate cause of his death; for, had you tried to rouse him from sleep, either sooner or later in his dream, all might have been well. The gentle shake you gave his arm, in all likelihood, was felt as the fatal fall of the platform or push of the executioner, which caused, from fright, a sudden collapse of the heart, that put a final stop to the circulation and caused immediate death. We regret it; but cannot say there was any bad intention on your part."

I thanked the surgeon for the justice he had done me in his remarks; and then addressing the bereaved father, I begged his forgiveness for my unfortunate interference with his son; I only did so to put a period to his dream,

as his sufferings appeared to me to be of the most acute description.

He stretched out his hand, and grasping mine, which he held for some time, while he strove to overcome his emotions, he at length said—

"Young man, from my heart I acquit you of every evil intention, and believe you from evidence that cannot be called in question. What you have told coincides with facts I already possess. For some time back the conduct of Charles gave me serious cause of uneasiness; but I knew not half the extent of his excesses, although his requests for money were incessant. I supplied them as far as was in my power; for he accompanied them with dutiful acknowledgments and plausible reasons. Until of late I had fulfilled his every wish; but I found I could no longer comply with prudence. Alas! you have let me at length understand that the gaming-table was the gulf that swallowed up all. I had for some time resolved to go personally and reason with him upon the folly of his extravagances; but, unfortunately, delayed it from day to day and week to week. I felt it to be my duty as a parent; but my heart shrunk from it. Fatal delay! Oh, that I had done as my duty urged me!" (Here his feelings overpowered him for a few minutes.) "Had I only gone even a few days before I received that fatal letter that at once roused me from my guilty supineness," (here he drew a letter from his pocket and gave it me,) "he might have been saved! Read it."

I complied. It was as follows:—

"Worthy Friend,—I scarce know how to communicate the information; but, I fear, no one here will do so in so gentle a manner. Your son Charles, I am grieved to say, has not been acting as I could have wished for this some time back. One of the partners called here this morning to inquire after him, as he had absconded from their

service on account of some irregularity that had been discovered in his cash entries, and made me afraid, by his manner, that there might be something worse. Do, for your own and his sake, come to town as quickly as possible. In the meantime, I shall do all in my power to avert any evil that may threaten.—Adieu!

"JOHN WALKER."

"I was on my way," he proceeded, "to save my poor Charles from shame, had even the workhouse been my only refuge at the close of my days. Alas! as he told in his dream, I fear he had forfeited his life by that fatal act, forgery, for which there is no pardon with man. If so, the present dispensation is one of mercy, for which I bless His name, who in all things doeth right."

My heart ached for the pious old man. We left the room, he leaning upon my arm. The surgeon and parent both pronounced me innocent of the young man's death. Those who still remained in the house, more particularly the hostess, appeared disappointed, and did not scruple to hint their doubts. Until the coroner's inquest sat, which was in the afternoon, the father of the stranger never left my side, but seemed to take a melancholy pleasure in conversing about his son. The jury, after a patient investigation, returned their verdict, "Died by the visitation of God."

I immediately bade farewell to the surgeon and the parent of the young man, and proceeded for Liverpool, musing upon my strange destiny. It appeared to me that I was haunted by some fatality, which plunged me constantly into misfortune. I rejoiced that I was on the point of leaving Britain, and hoped that in America I should be freed from my bad fortune.

When I arrived in Liverpool I found the packet on the eve of sailing; and, with all expedition, I made everything ready and went on board. We were to sail with the

morning tide. There were a good many passengers; but all of them appeared to be every-day personages—all less or more studious about their own comforts. After an agreeable voyage of five weeks, we arrived safe, and all in good health, in Charleston. In a few months I completed our arrangement satisfactorily, and began to make preparations for my return to England again. A circumstance, however, occurred, which overturned all my plans for a time, and gave a new turn to my thoughts. Was it possible that, after the way in which I had been cast off before by one of the bewitching sex, I could ever do more than look upon them again with indifference? I did not hate or shun their company, but a feeling pretty much akin to contempt, often stole over me as I recollected my old injury. I could feel the sensation at times give way for a few hours in the company of some females, and again return with redoubled force upon the slightest occasion, such as a single word or look. I was prejudiced, and resolved not again to submit to the power of the sex. But vain are the resolves of man. This continued struggle, I really believe, was the reason of my again falling more violently in love than ever, and that, too, against my own will. When I strove to discover faults, I only found perfections.

I had boarded in the house of a widow lady who had three daughters, none of them exceeding twelve years of age. A governess, one of the sweetest creatures that I had ever seen, or shall ever see again, had the charge of them. On the second evening after my arrival, I retired to my apartment, overcome by heat and fatigue. I lay listlessly thinking of Auld Reekie, the mysterious murder, and all the strange occurrences of my past life. My attention was awakened by a voice the sweetest I had ever heard. I listened in rapture. It was only a few notes, as the singer was trying the pitch of her voice, and soon

ceased. I was wondering which of the family it could be who sang so well, when I heard one of the daughters say, "Do, governess, sing me one song, and I will be a good girl all to-morrow. Pray do!" I became all attention—again the voice fell upon my ear. It was low and plaintive—the air was familiar to me—my whole soul became entranced—the tear-drop swam in my eyes—it was one of Scotland's sweetest ditties—"The Broom o' the Cowdenknowes." No one who has not heard, unexpected, in a foreign land the songs he loved in his youth, can appreciate the thrill of pleasing ecstasy that carries the mind, as it were, out of the body, when the ears catch the well-known sounds.

Next day I was all anxiety to see the individual who had so fascinated me the evening before. I found her all that my imagination had pictured her. A new feeling possessed me. In vain I called pride to my aid—I could not drive her from my thoughts. Sleeping or waking, her voice and form were ever present. I left the town for a time to free myself from these unwelcome feelings, pleasing as they were. I felt angry at myself for harbouring them; but all my endeavours were vain—go where I would, I was with my Mary on the Cowdenknowes.

I know not how it was. I had loved with more ardour in my first passion, and been more the victim of impulse; a dreamy sensation occupied my mind, and my whole existence seemed concentrated in her alone; now, my mind felt cool and collected—I weighed every fault and excellence; still I was hurried on, and felt like one placed in a boat in the current of a river, pulling hard to get out of the stream in vain. I at length laid down my oars, and yielded to the impulse. In short, I made up my mind to win the esteem and love of Mary; nor did I strive in vain. My humble attentions were kindly received, and dear to my heart is the remembrance of the timid glances I first

detected in her full black eyes. For some weeks I sought an opportunity to declare my love. She evidently shunned being alone with me; and I often could discern, when I came upon her by surprise, that she had been weeping. Some secret sorrow evidently oppressed her mind, and, at times, I have seen her beautiful face suffused with scarlet and her eyes become wet with tears, when my pompous landlady spoke of the ladies of Europe and "the *true* white-blooded females of America." I dreamed not at this time of the cause; but the truth dawned upon me afterwards.

It was on a delightful evening, after one of the most sultry days in this climate, I had wandered into the garden to enjoy the evening breeze, with which nothing in these northern climes will bear comparison; the fire-flies sported in myriads around, and gave animation to the scene; the fragrance of plants and the melody of birds filled the senses to repletion. I wanted only the presence of Mary to be completely happy. I heard a low warbling at a short distance, from a bower covered with clustering vines. It was Mary's voice! I stood overpowered with pleasure—she sung again one of our Scottish tunes.

As the last faint cadence died away, I entered the arbour; the noise of my approach made her start from her seat; she was hurrying away in confusion, when I gently seized her hand, and requested her to remain, if it were only for a few moments, as I had something to impart of the utmost importance to us both. She stood; her face was averted from my gaze; I felt her hand tremble in mine. Now that the opportunity I so much desired had been obtained, my resolution began to fail me. We had stood thus for some time.

"Sir, I must not stay here longer," she said. "Good evening!"

"Mary," said I, "I love you. May I hope to gain your regard by any length of service? Allow me to hope, and I shall be content."

"I must not listen to this language," she replied. "Do not hope. There is a barrier between us that cannot be removed. I cannot be yours. I am unworthy of your regard. Alas! I am a child of misfortune."

"Then," said I, "my hopes of happiness are fled for ever. So young, so beautiful, with a soul so elevated as I know yours to be, you can have done nothing to render you unworthy of me. For heaven's sake, tell me what that fatal barrier is. Is it love?"

"I thank you," she replied. "You do me but justice. A thought has never dwelt upon my mind for which I have cause to blush; but Nature has placed a gulf between you and me, you will not pass." She paused, and the tears swam in her eyes.

"For mercy's sake, proceed!" I said.

"*There is black blood in these veins*," she cried, in agony.

A load was at once removed from my mind. I raised her hand to my lips:—"Mary, my love, this is no bar. I come from a country where the aristocracy of blood is unknown, where nothing degrades man in the eyes of his fellow-man but vice."

Why more? Mary consented to be mine, and we were shortly after wed. I was blessed in the possession of one of the most gentle of beings.

We had been married about six or seven weeks, when business called me from Charleston to one of the northern States. I resolved to take Mary with me, as I was to go by sea; and our arrangements were completed. The vessel was to sail on the following day. I was seated with her, enjoying the cool of the evening, when a stranger called and requested to see me on business of importance. I immediately went to him, and was struck with the coarseness of his manners, and his vulgar importance. I bowed, and asked his business.

"You have a woman in this house," said he, "called Mary De Lyle, I guess."

"I do not understand the purport of your question," said I. "What do you mean?"

"My meaning is pretty clear," said he. "Mary De Lyle is in this house, and she is my property. If you offer to carry her out of the State, I will have her sent to jail, and you fined. That is right a-head, I guess."

"Wretch," said I, in a voice hoarse with rage, "get out of my house, or I will crush you to death. Begone!"

I believe I would have done him some fearful injury, had he not precipitately made his escape. In a frame of mind I want words to express, I hurried to Mary, and sank upon a seat, with my face buried in my hands. She, poor thing, came trembling to my side, and implored me to tell her what was the matter. I could only answer by my groans. At length, I looked imploringly in her face:—

"Mary, is it possible that you are a slave?" said I.

She uttered a piercing shriek, and sank inanimate at my feet. I lifted her upon the sofa; but it was long before she gave symptoms of returning life.

As soon as I could leave her, I went to a friend to ask his advice and assistance. Through him, I learned that what I feared was but too true. By the usages and laws of the State, she was still a slave, and liable to be hurried from me and sold to the highest bidder, or doomed to any drudgery her master might put her to, and even flogged at will. There was only one remedy that could be applied; and the specific was dollars. My friend was so kind as negotiate with the ruffian. One thousand was demanded, and cheerfully paid. I carried the manumission home to my sorrowing Mary. From her I learned, as she lay in bed—her beautiful face buried in the clothes, and her voice choked by sobs—that the wretch who had called on me was her own father, whose avarice could not let slip this

opportunity of extorting money. With an inconsistency often found in man, he had given Mary one of the best of educations, and for long treated her as a favoured child, during the life of her mother, who was one of his slaves, a woman of colour, and with some accomplishments, which she had acquired in a genteel family. At her death, Mary had gone as governess to my landlady; but, until the day of her father's claim, she had never dreamed of being a slave. I allowed the vessel to sail without me, wound up my affairs, and bade adieu for ever to the slave States. 'Tis now twenty years since I purchased a wife, after I had won her love, and I bless the day she was made mine; for I have had uninterrupted happiness in her and her offspring. The slave is now the happy wife and mother of five lovely children, who rejoice in their mother. After remaining some years in Leeds, I returned to Edinburgh. Widow Neil was dead; but one day I discovered, by mere chance, that the murder I committed in her house was on a *sheep*.

MY BLACK COAT;

OR,

THE BREAKING OF THE BRIDE'S CHINA.

GENTLE reader, the simple circumstances I am about to relate to you, hang upon what is termed—a bad omen. There are few amongst the uneducated who have not a degree of faith in omens; and even amongst the better educated and well informed there are many who, while they profess to disbelieve them, and, indeed, do disbelieve them, yet feel them in their hours of solitude. I have known individuals who, in the hour of danger, would have braved the cannon's mouth, or defied death to his teeth, who, nevertheless, would have buried their heads in the bedclothes at the howling of a dog at midnight, or spent a sleepless night from hearing the tick, tick, of the spider, or the untiring song of the kitchen-fire musician—the jolly little cricket. The age of omens, however, is drawing to a close; for truth in its progress is trampling delusion of every kind under its feet; yet, after all, though a belief in omens is a superstition, it is one that carries with it a portion of the poetry of our nature. But to proceed with our story.

Several years ago I was on my way from B—— to Edinburgh; and being as familiar with every cottage, tree, shrub, and whin-bush on the Dunbar and Lauder roads as with the face of an acquaintance, I made choice of the less-frequented path by Longformacus. I always took a secret pleasure in contemplating the dreariness of wild spreading desolation; and, next to looking on the

sea when its waves dance to the music of a hurricane, I loved to gaze on the heath-covered wilderness, where the blue horizon only girded its purple bosom. It was no season to look upon the heath in the beauty of barrenness, yet I purposely diverged from the main road. About an hour, therefore, after I had descended from the region of the Lammermoors, and entered the Lothians, I became sensible I was pursuing a path which was not forwarding my footsteps to Edinburgh. It was December; the sun had just gone down; I was not very partial to travelling in darkness, neither did I wish to trust to chance for finding a comfortable restingplace for the night. Perceiving a farm-steading and water-mill about a quarter of a mile from the road, I resolved to turn towards them, and make inquiry respecting the right path, or, at least, to request to be directed to the nearest inn.

The "town," as the three or four houses and mill were called, was all bustle and confusion. The female inhabitants were cleaning and scouring, and running to and fro. I quickly learned that all this note of preparation arose from the "maister" being to be married within three days. Seeing me a stranger, he came from his house towards me. He was a tall, stout, good-looking, jolly-faced farmer and miller. His manner of accosting me partook more of kindness than civility; and his inquiries were not free from the familiar, prying curiosity which prevails in every corner of our island, and, I must say, in the north in particular.

"Where do you come fra, na—if it be a fair question?" inquired he.

"From B——," was the brief and merely civil reply.

"An' hae ye come frae there the day?" he continued.

"Yes," was the answer.

"Ay, man, an' ye come frae B——, do ye?" added he; "then, nae doot, ye'll ken a person they ca' Mr. ——?"

"Did he come originally from Dunse?" returned I, mentioning also the occupation of the person referred to.

"The vera same," rejoined the miller; "are ye acquainted wi' him, sir?"

"I ought to be," replied I; "the person you speak of is merely my father."

"Your faither!" exclaimed he, opening his mouth and eyes to their full width, and standing for a moment the picture of surprise—"Gude gracious! ye dinna say sae!—is he really your faither? Losh, man, do you no ken, then, that I'm your cousin! Ye've heard o' your cousin, Willie Stewart."

"Fifty times," replied I.

"Weel, I'm the vera man," said he—"Gie's your hand; for, 'odsake, man, I'm as glad as glad can be. This is real extraordinar'. I've often heard o' you—it will be you that writes the buiks—faith ye'll be able to mak something o' this. But come awa' into the house—ye dinna stir a mile far'er for a week, at ony rate."

So saying, and still grasping my hand, he led me to the farm-house. On crossing the threshold—

"Here, lassie," he cried, in a voice that made roof and rafters ring, "bring ben the speerits, and get on the kettle—here's a cousin that I ne'er saw in my life afore."

A few minutes served mutually to confirm and explain our newly-discovered relationship.

"Man," said he, as we were filling a second glass, "ye've just come in the very nick o' time; an' I'll tell ye how. Ye see I'm gaun to be married the day after the morn; an' no haein' a friend o' ony kin-kind in this quarter, I had to ask an acquaintance to be the best man. Now, this was vexin' me mair than ye can think, particularly, ye see, because the sweetheart has aye been hinting to me that it wadna be lucky for me no to hae a bluid relation for a best man. For that matter, indeed, luck

here, luck there, I no care the toss up o' a ha'penny about omens mysel'; but now that ye've fortunately come, I'm a great deal easier, an' it will be ae craik out o' the way, for it will please her; an' ye may guess, between you an' me, that she's worth the pleasin', or I wadna had her; so I'll just step ower an' tell the ither lad that I hae a cousin come to be my best man, an' he'll think naething o't."

On the morning of the third day, the bride and her friends arrived. She was the only child of a Lammermoor farmer, and was in truth a real mountain flower—a heath blossom; for the rude health that laughed upon her cheeks approached nearer the hue of the heather-bell, than the rose and vermillion of which poets speak. She was comely withal, possessing an appearance of considerable strength, and was rather above the middle size—in short, she was the very belle ideal of a miller's wife!

But to go on. Twelve couple accompanied the happy miller and his bride to the manse, independent of the married, middle-aged, and grey-haired visitors, who followed behind and by our side. We were thus proceeding onward to the house of the minister, whose blessing was to make a couple happy, and the arm of the blooming bride was through mine, when I heard a voice, or rather let me say a sound, like the croak of a raven, exclaim—

"Mercy on us! saw ye e'er the like o' that!—the best man, I'll declare, has a black coat on!"

"An' that's no lucky!" replied another.

"Lucky!" responded the raven voice—"just perfectly awfu'! I wadna it had happened at the weddin' o' a bairn o' mine for the king's dominions."

I observed the bride steal a glance at my shoulder; I felt, or thought I felt, as if she shrunk from my arm; and when I spoke to her, her speech faltered. I found that my cousin, in avoiding one omen, had stumbled upon another, in my black coat. I was wroth with the rural

prophetess, and turned round to behold her. Her little grey eyes, twinkling through spectacles, were wink, winking upon my ill-fated coat. She was a crooked (forgive me for saying an ugly), little, old woman; she was "bearded like a pard," and walked with a crooked stick mounted with silver. (On the very spot* where she then was, the last witch in Scotland was burned.) I turned from the grinning sibyl with disgust.

On the previous day, and during part of the night, the rain had fallen heavily, and the Broxburn was swollen to the magnitude of a little river. The manse lay on the opposite side of the burn, which was generally crossed by the aid of stepping-stones, but on the day in question the tops of the stones were barely visible. On crossing the burn the foot of the bride slipped, and the bridegroom, in his eagerness to assist her, slipped also—knee-deep in the water. The raven voice was again heard—it was another omen.

The kitchen was the only room in the manse large enough to contain the spectators assembled to witness the ceremony, which passed over smoothly enough, save that, when the clergyman was about to join the hands of the parties, I drew off the glove of the bride a second or two before the bridesmaid performed a similar operation on the hand of the bridegroom. I heard the whisper of the crooked old woman, and saw that the eyes of the other women were upon me. I felt that I had committed another omen, and almost resolved to renounce wearing "blacks" for the future. The ceremony, however, was concluded; we returned from the manse, and everything was forgotten, save mirth and music, till the hour arrived for tea.

The bride's mother had boasted of her "daughter's double set o' real china" during the afternoon; and the

* The last person burned for witchcraft in Scotland was at Spot—the scene of our present story

female part of the company evidently felt anxious to examine the costly crockery. A young woman was entering with a tray and the tea equipage—another, similarly laden, followed behind her. The "sneck" of the door caught the handle of the tray, and down went china, waiting-maid, and all! The fall startled her companion—their feet became entangled—both embraced the floor, and the china from both trays lay scattered around them in a thousand shapes and sizes! This was an omen with a vengeance! I could not avoid stealing a look at the sleeve of my black coat. The bearded old woman seemed inspired. She declared the luck of the house was broken! Of the double set of real china not a cup was left—not an odd saucer. The bridegroom bore the misfortune as a man; and, gently drawing the head of his young partner towards him, said—

"Never mind them, hinny—let them gang—we'll get mair."

The bride, poor thing, shed a tear; but the miller threw his arm round her neck, stole a kiss, and she blushed and smiled.

It was evident, however, that every one of the company regarded this as a real omen. The mill-loft was prepared for the joyous dance; but scarce had the fantastic toes (some of them were not light ones) begun to move through the mazy rounds, when the loft-floor broke down beneath the bounding feet of the happy-hearted miller; for, unfortunately, he considered not that his goodly body was heavier than his spirits. It was omen upon omen—the work of breaking had begun—the "luck" of the young couple was departed.

Three days after the wedding, one of the miller's carts was got in readiness to carry home the bride's mother. On crossing the unlucky burn, to which we have already alluded, the horse stumbled, fell, and broke its

knee, and had to be taken back, and another put in its place.

"Mair breakings!" exclaimed the now almost heart-broken old woman. "Oh, dear sake! how will a' this end for my puir bairn!"

I remained with my new-found relatives about a week; and while there the miller sent his boy for payment of an account of thirty pounds, he having to make up money to pay a corn-factor at the Haddington market on the following day. In the evening the boy returned.

"Weel, callant," inquired the miller, "hae ye gotten the siller?"

"No," replied the youth.

"Mercy me!" exclaimed my cousin, hastily, "hae ye no gotten the siller? Wha did ye see, or what did they say?"

"I saw the wife," returned the boy; "an' she said—'Siller! laddie, what's brought ye here for siller?—I daresay your maister's daft! Do ye no ken we're broken! I'm sure a'body kens that we broke yesterday!"

"The mischief break them!" exclaimed the miller, rising and walking hurriedly across the room—"this is breaking in earnest."

I may not here particularize the breakings that followed. One misfortune succeeded another, till the miller broke also. All that he had was put under the hammer, and he wandered forth with his young wife a broken man.

Some years afterwards, I met with him in a different part of the country. He had the management of extensive flour mills. He was again doing well, and had money in his master's hands. At last there seemed to be an end of the breakings. We were sitting together when a third person entered, with a rueful countenance.

"Willie," said he, with the tone of a speaking sepulchre, "hae ye heard the news?"

"What news, now?" inquired the miller, seriously.

"The maister's broken!" rejoined the other.

"An' my fifty pounds?" responded my cousin, in a voice of horror.

"Are broken wi' him," returned the stranger. "Oh, gude gracious!" cried the young wife, wringing her hands, "I'm sure I wish I were out o' this world!—will ever thir breakings be done!—what tempted my mother to buy me the cheena?"

"Or me to wear a black coat at your wedding," thought I.

A few weeks afterwards a letter arrived, announcing that death had suddenly broken the thread of life of her aged father, and her mother requested them to come and take charge of the farm which was now theirs. They went. The old man had made money on the hills. They got the better of the broken china and of my black coat. Fortune broke in upon them. My cousin declared that omens were nonsense, and his wife added that she "really thought there was naething in them, But it was lang an' mony a day," she added, "or I could get your black coat and my mother's cheena out o' my mind."

They began to prosper and they prosper still.

END OF VOLUME II.

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